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Spring 1997

The Black Church: Facing and Responding to Social, Economic, and Political Challenges

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Trotter Review

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Introduction

by James Jennings

In the 1980s and 1990s numerous studies about the status and future prospects of the Black community in the United States were published. Unfortunately, too many of these studies ignored the historical role that the Black Church has played in the economic and political development of the Black community in this country. Some scholars and researchers, as well as others in civic arenas, have overlooked not only the historical and institutional resiliency of the Black church, but the current work of this institution in the areas of social, cultural, and educational empowerment of people of African descent in the United States.

As historian Andrew Billingsley has pointed out, the Black Church is actually the very "first community institution" owned, operated, and directed by Black people, even during the period of Black enslavement. Many Black churches have pursued a "holistic ministry" providing a range of services to the community, including services in the area of health, housing, education, and economic development. But this is not a new development. As our first essay illustrates, published by George E. Haynes in 1928, the Black Church was involved in improving living conditions in Black communities a long time before government, foundations, or universities adopted an interest in this area.

The Black Church is still, as it was when Blacks were enslaved in this country, the most prominent institution in this community. It is in the Black Church that we find some of the most committed individuals working to empower the Black community. The Black Church generally commands impressive assets, such as land, economic independence, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism.

In order to understand and appreciate the critical importance of the Black Church in the empowerment of Blacks and, indeed, other communities of color in the United States, I am pleased to introduce the Spring 1997 issue of the *Trotter Review*. As noted above, we begin this issue with a reprinting of an essay by George E. Haynes, originally published in 1928, as part of a report issued by the Commission on the Church and Race Relations and sponsored by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Haynes described the involvement of the Black Church in the Black community during the 1920s, and illustrates the critical role that this institution played in the social and economic, as well as spiritual, survival of Black people in this country. Special appreciation and thanks are extended to Sage Publications for allowing us to reprint this important article.

The distinguished professor of Black Studies at The Ohio State University, William Nelson, provides a review of how the Black Church was involved in one of the biggest and most important events organized by the Black community under the leadership of Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam: the Million Man March. On October 16, 1995, more than one million men congregated in Washington D.C. to pay homage to the teachings of Black religious institutions in the United States. In a related topic, historian Frederick C. Harris shows how a broad range of political involvement of the Black Church is generally supported by members of the congregation. His research, based on a review of polls, has uncovered significant support, but still some ambivalence, regarding this matter. Professor Hubert Walters, one of the original founders of the Kuumba Singers at Harvard University, also provides some historical information explaining that the Black Church is the foundation of commercial Black music today.

Despite the work of the Black Church in democratizing United States society, this institution has been threatening to some groups. As a symbol of political and economic independence and resistance, Black churches have been bombed and its members terrorized. As we know, this situation is not just past history, but continues as a major problem today. Journalist Salim Muwakkil shares some thoughts with our readers regarding the recent reemergence of Black church bombings.

In an important article bridging the experiences of the Black Church in the United States with the Black Church in England, Paul Grant describes some of the challenges facing the latter. As is the case in the United States, the Black Church in England has opportunity to be involved in improving living conditions for all people through work in the social and economic arenas of people's lives. But it must overcome its hesitancy to utilize and endorse radical social change in British society.

Dr. Marjorie B. Lewis proposes in her article that partnerships between the Black Church and non-profits, and government is a relatively new and effective policy tool for urban communities challenged by poverty. It is critical to examine and utilize this tool due to the failures of earlier policy efforts aimed at social and urban crisis. She highlights a few places where public sector and Black church partnerships seem to be effective. Dr. Sylvia Johnson writes about a new effort to link foundations with the Black Church in the interests of community and economic empowerment. Under the leadership of Dr. Johnson and her colleagues at The Hyams Foundation in Boston, Massachusetts, this foundation has taken a lead in building models of collaboration with Black churches. Many foundations across the nation are watching this initiative carefully in order to plan similar efforts in their own cities.

Another local effort is highlighted by Dr. Stephanie Athey of Stetson University in Florida. She describes the mission and work of the Dr. Howard Thurman Center in DeLand County, under the directorship of Reverend Jefferson P. Rogers. Dr. Howard Thurman served as a leading theologian for advancing knowledge and developing appropriate relationships with political, social, and economic institutions through application of the resources of the Black Church.

The last essay in this section by Dr. Cheryl Townsend

Gilkes helps to make the point that the basis of the work of the Black Church is still spiritual. The author illustrates that the motivating force behind the political, economic, and social work of the Black Church is the Sacred. As we discuss how the Black Church is involved in a range of facets of Black life, this observation cannot be overlooked for it explains the commitment, energy, and sacrifice that is corralled in service towards a more democratic and just society.

In the *Commentary* section of this issue, we begin with a review essay of Dr. Samuel Dewitt Proctor's recent work, *The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith*. The reviewer, Dr. Donald Cunnigen, discusses Dr. Proctor's book within the context of the values that seems to have guided Dr. Proctor's faith and scholarship. The following piece highlights an organization dedicated to involving the Black Church more aggressively in the economic and civic empowerment of the Black community. Dr. Harold W. Horton, associate director of the Trotter Institute, interviews Dr. Robert Franklin who was recently appointed director of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As such, Dr. Franklin will seek to expand and facilitate church-based institutions and partnerships with organizations focusing on the social and economic improvement of Black communities.

Ms. Kimberly Moffitt, currently pursuing a doctorate in communications at Howard University, provides a profile of an individual who epitomizes the history, work, and commitment of the Black Church towards the social, economic, and political empowerment of the Black community. I am honored that this issue of the *Trotter Review* is featuring a brief profile of the Reverend Michael E. Haynes of Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Reverend Haynes is not only a friend of The Trotter Institute, but a role model for many people in Boston and throughout the country. He has embodied in his religious, professional, and political work the impact that the Black Church can have in improving the lives of all people in our society.

James Jennings is director of The Trotter Institute and professor of political science at University of Massachusetts Boston. He is the author of a number of books, including *Blacks, Latinos, and Asians in Urban America* and *Race, Politics, and Economic Development: Community Perspectives*.

The Church and Negro Progress

by George E. Haynes

The marked progress of the Negro in America in which the church has been a factor has been of three general types. The first is intra-group advancement in such phases of life as education and wealth. The second is inter-group adjustments between the Negro population and the white population in such matters as economic relationships, citizenship rights and privileges, interracial contacts and fellowship. There is a third type of progress which touches both the internal and external life of the Negro group such as the cultural contributions of Negroes which have gradually been incorporated into our common life. There are, of course, the emotional attitudes, the growing group solidarity and consciousness, the development of moral customs and similar mental and social factors which the church has profoundly influenced but which are not measurable by the data and objective tests now available.

Educational Progress

In the educational progress of Negroes the church has performed two functions: (1) Financial support and administrative development of schools of several grades and of colleges; (2) An organized channel for distribution of information and emotional stimulation to the rank and file of the Negro group. In the first field the white Protestant churches of the North have performed the larger part of the service, but the distinctly Negro churches have had an increasing share. In the second field obviously Negro churches, both those in distinctly Negro denominations and Negro congregations in mixed communions, have been almost entirely the means of group service.

The Protestant Church missionary societies following the Civil War opened schools with curricula and teachers that introduced the idea of popular education in the South. Upon that pioneer work has been built the public elementary schools for Negroes now gradually gaining support from public taxes in southern states through the stimulus of such agencies as the Jeanes-Slater Funds, the Julius Rosenwald Fund and the General Education Board.

Negro high schools are still largely dependent upon church agencies for support and supervision. The rapidly growing county training schools that are attaining high school standards have accelerated the sentiment among whites for public support. The effect of the church support upon provision of high school opportunities for Negroes in the South is shown by the fact that in 1915 there were probably about 45 four-year course and 18 three-year course public schools in thirteen southern states. There were about 100 four-year course private high schools and a similar number of private schools offering some secondary work of three years or less, at least three-fourths of these private high schools were church-supported.

Twelve years have witnessed some improvement as is shown in figures compiled by W. A. Robinson[1] for 1926–27 for the sixteen southern states: There were 167 public and 84 private state accredited four-year course high schools for Negroes. But these should be contrasted with 4,760 public and 547 private state accredited four-year high schools for whites. The Negro population of these states was 9,008,096 and the white population 28,596,689 in 1920. Meager as it is, more than one-third of real secondary education among Negroes of the South today would disappear if high schools now supported by church educational and mission boards were discontinued.

The public schools during preceding decades have been largely supplied with teachers from normal and industrial schools and colleges all of which, except about thirty-four land-grant colleges and normal and industrial schools receiving largely state aid, were founded and nurtured through infancy by churches or were the direct offshoots of institutions so founded. The history of such institutions as Hampton Institute, Howard University, Fisk University, Talladega College, Wiley College, Virginia Union University, Morehouse College and Knoxville College, to name only a few examples, bears eloquent testimony that the church nurtured Negro educational development. The fact should be added that these schools are receiving increased financial support from Negro church constituents, and that such institutions as Wilberforce University, Livingstone College and Texas College were founded and developed by the Negro churches. It may be safely asserted that up to 1910 the trained leadership of the Negro people in America, with a few exceptions, was the product of schools and colleges fostered by white and Negro churches, and that a major share of the present higher educational training of Negroes is in institutions largely supported by the churches.

Influence of the Negro Church

The influence of the Negro church as an agency for distribution of information to the rank and file of the Negro group has long been recognized by the business and professional classes. Negro business enterprises ally themselves with Negro churches, cultivate their ministers and seek Negro church fairs, bazaars and picnics as occasions to advertise their wares. Negro doctors, dentists, lawyers and politicians of both races for obvious reasons frequent these churches, speak in their meetings, and contribute liberally to their collections. In many cases they criticize the Negro churches and ministers, but realize they can reach and influence a larger number of Negroes through this channel than any other.

This article was first published in The Annals, *vol. CXXXX, no. 229 (November 1928). Special thanks to Sage Publications, Inc. for granting permission to publish it in this issue of the* Trotter Review.

The significance of this mass contact is shown by the figures of Negro church membership the past thirty years. Of denominations exclusively Negro in 1906, there were 2,311,172 members enrolled in Baptist church bodies; 869,710 enrolled in Methodist church bodies; and 24,165 enrolled in other church bodies. In 1916 there were 2,967,085 in Baptist church bodies; 1,077,324 enrolled in Methodist church bodies, and 38,869 enrolled in other Negro church bodies. Incomplete United States Census figures for 1926 give for two exclusively Negro Baptist bodies an enrollment of 3,240,801 members; for eight exclusively Negro Methodist bodies, 1,235,789 members; and for twelve other Negro church bodies 181,880 members.

Of Negro members in communions having mixed membership, in 1906 Baptist bodies enrolled 43,617 Negro members; Methodist bodies enrolled 312,421 Negro members, and other bodies enrolled 83,507 Negro members. In 1916, Baptist bodies enrolled 53,842 Negro members; Methodist bodies enrolled 323,713 Negro members; and other bodies enrolled 103,216 Negro members. Figures for Negroes in mixed communions in 1926 are not available at this writing.

The total enrollment of Negroes in church membership is larger than their membership in any other organization, and probably as large as the membership of fraternities, clubs, insurance companies and similar organizations combined. Church members, furthermore, by no means embrace all who attend church meetings. Probably three-fourths of the Negro population of more than eleven millions regularly or occasionally attend meetings in churches.

The Negro church as a channel for distribution of information and of emotional stimulation is indicated by the figures of mass grouping just outlined and emphasized by a description of the activities that center in the church of the Negro community, separated as it is from most of the other intellectual, political and emotional avenues of expression. The Negro as a worker makes contact with the white world when on his job and receives information, instruction and stimulus so far as his occupation influences his ways of life. All his leisure-time activities that condition intellectual development and emotional motivation under present conditions of segregated Negro life, must find their channel mainly through the principal community agency the Negro has—his church.

These activities vary in the rural district, the small towns and cities and the larger metropolitan centers. In each rural area there are at least two small Negro churches, a Baptist and a Methodist Church, each having religious services once or twice a month and receiving inspiration from an absentee minister on his occasional Sunday visits. The meetings, however, are occasions for exchange of gossip on local events and for the spread of news and stimulation from the larger world. School, home and farm affairs are here discussed. During the summer when weather and roads allow it, sociables and picnics center around the church or are fostered by it.

In the small towns and cities larger group life is feasible, schools are better, houses and homes are often more comfortable. The Negro churches with resident ministers become the centers for musical and literary entertainments. Stereoptican or moving picture shows, traveling musicians and lecturers, church fairs and other exhibitions become the means of community culture. In the large metropolitan cities the Negro church, of course, comes somewhat into competition with the moving picture theatre, the dance hall and other places that cater to leisure. In a scientific survey of Negro life in Detroit in 1926, the Mayor's Interracial Committee reported that the Negro "has been humiliated in so many public and privately owned institutions and amusement places that he has resorted to the church as a place in which he can be sure of peacefully spending his leisure time. To a large extent it takes the place of the theatre, the dance halls and similar amusement places, and fills the vacancy created by the failure of the public and commercial places of recreation and amusement to give him a cordial welcome. Consequently, the average Negro church in Detroit keeps its doors open constantly for the use of the community. Numerous suppers, lectures, recitals, debates, plays and the like are given by clubs and individuals from within and without the congregation."[2]

Functions of the Negro Church

Similar outlet for leisure-time activity is being provided by Negro churches in Jacksonville, Fla., Atlanta, Gal, Baltimore, Md., Washington, D.C., Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York, Springfield, Mass., and many other cities. Many of these are institutional churches with programs, equipment and personnel both volunteer and employed, that compare favorably with the best in popular educational and recreational provision for city neighborhoods. These examples, however, should not lead to the conclusion that the 47,000 Negro churches, or a majority of them, have embraced the programs, technique and policies required to serve the health, housing, recreational and other community needs of the Negro. Progress in this adjustment of the Negro church has been slow due in good measure to the past policy and practice of white philanthropists and social work leaders. With the background of the limited function of the church among themselves, they have subsidized community efforts for improvement of the Negro masses apart from the Negro church, the principal agency that commands the loyalty of the Negro people. Consequently much of the efforts of communities to elevate the Negro have missed the mark and the main agency for his group advancement has not been adequately developed for the social power it can wield.

That many churches have served these needs and are slowly adapting their programs to meet rapidly changing conditions with the migration of Negroes to cities is clearly indicated by such facts as these: For about ten years the white women of the Southern Presbyterian Church have held annual institutes of seven days each for Negro women in the southern states. In 1927 these institutes were held in thirteen states to train colored

women for community leadership in such matters as child training, food conservation, health and domestic science. The total attendance in ten states in 1925 was 429. The women of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, have fostered community centers in several southern cities in cooperation with Negro churches and schools. The Methodist Episcopal Church has a full-time secretary with assistants who are studying conditions, holding social service institutes with its Negro ministers and fostering church projects in community betterment. The Protestant Episcopal Church has a training school for Negro social workers, and the Congregational churches are seeking to establish a line of churches North and South for serving the social needs of Negro communities. These samples indicate the connection of the Church with Negro life and a growing adaptation to meet their needs.

The relation of Negro churches to Negro progress in wealth may be seen in the value of church property estimated by the Negro Year Book in 1926 at $100,000,000. This includes school property and parsonages owned by Negro churches as well as buildings used for worship, religious education and social service. Most of this property has been accumulated from small contributions of millions of volunteer givers. It represents the oldest and most continuous, if not the largest and most significant, thrift effort of the Negro group. This combination of thrift funds from small givers worked out in the church has been applied elsewhere, and largely out of it has grown the Negro fraternal beneficial organizations which in 1926 had $218,984,213 benefit certificates in force, $9,349,051 of assets, and paid $2,727,929 in sickness and death benefits. Were the facts available, the encouragement for other wealth accumulations of the group could probably be traced to Negro churches. While proof from statistical data is not available, general observation leads to the impression that Negro educational progress outlined in the preceding paragraphs has had its collateral effect in the increase of wealth among Negroes, especially the professional classes, and in narrowing the margin of poverty among wage-earners.

Economic Relationships

In the advancement of interracial adjustment perhaps the church would not usually be thought of in the field of economic relationships. While difficult to measure, the Negro church has been, nevertheless, a powerful factor in organized economic expression of the group. The Secretary of the Detroit Urban League in 1918 testified that in the placement of about 10,000 Negro workers, men and women, for the fiscal year ending November 15, 1917, those secured through church channels were the most satisfactory; so much so that the employment recruiters of the city turned from pool rooms, saloons and similar places of rendezvous to the churches as the principal source for their labor supply. The Negro worker is still hesitant, because of past experience, about entering heartily into labor organizations with white workers. His church is a working-class institution and is still his avenue of collective action. If that church becomes more conscious of its working-class character it will become a significant factor in industrial relations of the two races. In the farming areas of the South the Negro church is recognized as the one agency that sways the mass of workers. This has, of course, often been used to the disadvantage of the Negro peasant. That is not always the case, however. For example: The farm demonstration movement has received the cooperation of Negro churches; in plantation areas wherever Negro tenants have sought better terms in any concerted way their efforts have centered around a Negro church.

Civic Relationships

Space allows only a few illustrations of the influence of the church in the Negro's struggle for free citizenship status. Henry Ward Beecher and his more illustrious sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, received their inspiration and did a large part of their great work for freedom of the slave through the Church. One of the pioneer Negro advocates of unqualified enjoyment of citizenship rights and privileges was H. M. Turner, himself a freed slave, a Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This same organization for more than a hundred years has had a line of prelates known within and without the Negro world for their uncompromising stand on civic rights and privileges for the race. The present-day tendency of many Negro voters to show their political independence by allying themselves with the Democratic Party had its inception largely in the dramatic bolt to the support of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 of Bishop Alexander Walters of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, who announced his stand in an address at a mass meeting which crowded Carnegie Hall in New York, and by a spectacular procession to the Baltimore Democratic Convention with his followers, of them prominent Negro churchmen. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People during nearly a score of years of work for equality of citizenship for Americans of color has leaned upon the Negro churches for meeting places, for large parts of its audiences at public meetings and for financial support.

Interracial Cooperation

Interracial contacts under influence of the Church between whites and Negroes, especially in the South, have been important since the days when many white churches had pews for slaves and many able Negro preachers "broke the Bread of Life" to white parishioners. After emancipation the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, attended the birth of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and ordained its first bishop as a communion for the freedmen who had formerly been members of the southern body. (Throughout the years since there has been comity between clergy and laymen of the two denominations locally and nationally.) While not so formally organized as the Methodists, the white and Negro Baptists, North and South, have sustained contacts which embraced cooperation in action and comity in

religious doctrine.

The growing liberal opinion in the South on the race question had its inception and continues to get its stimulation largely through the contacts of churchmen, white and colored. The outstanding men and women of this movement, especially among southern white people, have been officers and laymen of prominence in the churches, and some of the most important public utterances of organized groups of whites on the race problem the past twenty years have been from church groups such as the College of Bishops, the General Conference and the Women's Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Women's Auxiliary of the Southern Presbyterian Church, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Northern Baptist Convention, the National Council of Congregational Churches, and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In recent years the churches have recognized that the very success of sixty years of educational work they have shared in rendering the Negro people has developed a highly intelligent, cultured class and has raised the level of intelligence of the whole group. With corresponding reduction of poverty and serfdom has come a growing and insistent demand for participation in all the varied departments of American life. White and Negro church leaders for the past twenty years through more than twenty-eight denominations have been experimenting in effective methods of education in friendly racial attitudes and in practical constructive programs of peaceful race adjustment toward this end. The first line of action has been a participation in the campaign to abolish the lynching evil and remove the racial discrimination in the courts of law, as the first step toward security of person and property.

The church leaders, however, have visualized a larger and more positive program and have been laying a foundation for it by an educational campaign of conferences, study and discussion groups, the preparation and distribution of books and pamphlets, etc. Conservative estimate places the number of church constituents already touched by this educational effort as between four and five millions. The dominant idea of these interracial contacts has not been the desire of the whites to exploit the blacks, nor the patronizing policy of superiors who would uplift the lowly, but a clear recognition of mutual advantage of remarkable artistic creations from Bible interaction on the horizontal plane themes where both races have substantial values to contribute.

Partly as a result of these efforts to adjust racial relations there has been increased church support for Negro education, in a rapid multiplication of interracial committees and groups for various community and cultural enterprises of mutual interest in the study of the problems in more than sixty southern white colleges, and in the participation of the Negro both as contributor and beneficiary in the welfare programs of almost every state and city where there are Negro populations of large proportions.

Cultural Developments

The contributions which Negroes have made to American culture have had a unique relation to the Negro church. Negro spirituals in Negro church meetings were born out of the yearning for self-expression which the Negro found only in religious group worship. These songs yield spiritual as well as musical substance of universal value. Adaptations and art compositions, too numerous to mention here, based upon these Negro creations have delighted music lovers in Europe and America. Negro musicians, poets and prose writers and artists found encouragement from Negro church audiences years before the white public knew they existed. Roland Hayes, one of the world's great singers, largely served his apprenticeship in concerts under such auspices. The budding of Fine Arts produced by Negroes has, fortunately, had the stimulus of school instruction and some philanthropic support, but Henry O. Tanner, the Negro artist who has so far achieved the widest recognition, is the son of a Negro bishop, received his nurture in the church and has rewarded him with remarkable artistic creations from Bible themes.

Attitudes and Morale

To venture upon a discussion of emotional attitudes and the growth of group consciousness in relation to the church is too hazardous in view of the meager data and objective tests. That the Negro church has heen the means of increasing group organization, solidarity and power to serve a growing group consciousness of values and purpose is indicated by the increasing membership, especially in church denominations exclusively Negro; by the increase in Negro church property estimated by the NegroYear Book in 1926 as $98,500,000 since 1866 and by the number, the independence and the aggressiveness of Negro church leaders.

Throughout the three centuries of hectic Negro life in America the Negro church and religious life has given a motivation born of hope in the future and faith in the present that has sustained the morale and lengthened the patience of the Negro under conditions which either broke the Indian's spirit or drove him into the revolt of despair. In his church services the Negro felt the elevation of his belief in God who respected his personality while the surrounding world humiliated and exploited him. The Negro minister usually was deficient in the erudition of the schools, but he shared the humiliations and trials of his people and knew from experience how to reach the motivating forces of their imagination and emotions and to energize them for the trials of their present plight by the promises of freedom, peace and plenty in a Better Land. Probably this same factor has made the Negro church such a powerful force among Negroes migrating to southern cities and to northern industrial centers. Cases are on record of whole church congregations moving North in a body and bringing their pastors with them.

In another direction the Negro church has given social compensation for the restrictions of the segregated, handicapped life of Negroes in America. The Negro group has potential leaders seeking creative expression far

beyond the opportunities the white world allows under the existing social pressure of race prejudices and taboos. In economic life the higher paid employment and the executive and managerial positions are closed to Negroes. In the broader fields of education the avenues to leadership in administration, research and instruction are not open to them. Similar situations have confronted the Negro aspirant for leadership in many other fields. Gradually the Negro doctor and dentist won places through Negro patronage, but even here the social pressure of the color line still operates in some medical schools, in hospitals and in nurse training schools. Until recent years, therefore, Negroes with talent for leadership found their main outlet in church organizations. The rapid growth of Negro church membership during the past thirty years, in the face of the multiplying distractions of modern living and the changed conditions of urban residence, is partially explained by the church as a field for leadership excluded from other avenues and by the motivating force of emotional and imaginative self-expression in Negro church exercises.

...no one institution has probably contributed as much to Negro development.

In the phases of life touched upon here, and in others not mentioned, the church has influenced favorably Negro progress. It has sometimes affected Negro life unfavorably, conserving forces and sustaining practices upon which social progress had pronounced sentence. The divisive force of zealous denominationalism, the consequent weakening of leadership and the multiplication of edifices ill adapted for serving present needs are all faults chargeable to the church.

In spite of these weaknesses, however, no one institution has probably contributed as much to Negro development. In the development of education and thrift, in the interracial adjustments between white and Negro populations and in the interdependent give-and-take of cultural life in America, as well as the less tangible social factors of interracial contacts, of group organization, racial attitudes, solidarity and motivation, the church and especially the segregated Negro church, has been a powerful ally of Negro progress.

Notes

[1]W.A. Robinson. "Four-Year Accredited High Schools in the South." *The Bulletin of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools*, volume viii, number viii, (June/July 1928).

[2]Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Inc. *The Negro in Detroit*. (Detroit: Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, 1926).

George E. Haynes served as secretary of the Commission on the Church and Race Relations for the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America during the writing of this article in 1928.

Black Church Politics and the Million Man March

by William E. Nelson, Jr.

October 16, 1995 will be recorded as one of the most important days in the political history of African Americans in the United States. This day witnessed the largest mass political demonstration in the history of this nation—the assemblage of more than 1.2 million African-American men in Washington, D.C. under the banner of the Million Man March.[1] Both the size and the overt political objectives of the march set it firmly apart from the pallid, feeble demonstrations in Washington led by the NAACP in the 1980s; in its size and character, the march echoed the focus on power and system level change that emerged as the hallmark of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the national mobilization against the war in Vietnam.

One key political objective of the march was to place the issue of Black suffering back on the national policy agenda.[2] Since the Republican triumph in the November 1994 midterm elections and the publicizing of the party's "Contract With America," the continuing and expanding social and economic crisis of the Black community had virtually disappeared as an arena of public policy debate. Republican political rhetoric papered over the most vital dimensions of the crisis in international capitalism and blamed Black inner city victims for domestic economic woes that threatened to produce record deficits, massive unemployment, and uncontrolled inflation.[3] Absent from the analysis was a realistic appraisal of Black social and economic decline: a poverty rate of over 40 percent; unemployment rates that averaged two times that of whites; health and housing standards matching those of city dwellers in some of the world's poorest countries; median family incomes averaging 58 percent of white median family incomes. Statistics regarding the social and economic status of Black men suggested that they were the special victims of American racial oppression. Environmental circumstances rendered the lives of young Black men extremely perilous; homicide had become one of the leading causes of death among young Black men, with 72 Black men per 100,000 falling victim to homicide compared to 9.3 white men per 100,000.[4] Aggressive law enforcement and prison building policies meant the incarceration of young Black men in unprecedented numbers, leaving a vacuum of political and family leadership that had a devastating impact on the sustained growth potential of the Black community.[5]

The Million Man March was, in part, Black America's response to these developments. Black men descended on Washington determined to bring the spiral of social and economic erosion in the Black community to a halt. Expressing extreme concern for increasing racism in America and the deterioration of the social, cultural, and moral fabric of the Black community, Black men came to Washington, in the words of the march's mission statement, "Committed to the ongoing struggle for a free and empowered community, a just society and a better world."[6] Defining ingredients of the march's political agenda included challenges to the government to stop the brutal assault against affirmative action, establish programs to provide affordable health care and housing, and pass legislation creating an economic bill of rights and a plan to rebuild America's declining cities.[7] One aspect of this political agenda also sought to repair the negative, stereotypical image of Black men manufactured by the American media. Worldwide publicity surrounding the lives of Black men like Willie Horton, Mike Tyson, and O.J. Simpson stamped all Black men in America with a demonized personality, and placed Black men on a war-like footing with white America:

> The emancipation of black men has been abandoned. The communications with black men have been cut off, which is what happens when you're on a war footing with the enemy. Talks break down and hostility begins. Their books are seldom used in college courses anymore. A variety of viewpoints from black men are ignored by the white male-run media who prefer athletes and criminals, and other dopey people and use black and white feminists to blame all the social evils of society on black men, while theirs go unchecked.[8]

To combat these negative stereotypes, and establish an enduring base of functional power for the entire Black community, the leaders of the march realized that the march must be well organized and coordinated, extraordinarily peaceful, and sufficiently inclusive to embrace the entire panoply of political interests in the Black community. In this regard it should be noted that the march was successful in drawing representation from virtually every sector of the Black community. One study conducted by a research team from Central State University found that the occupations of the marchers ranged from business owners to a wide variety of unskilled workers, paraprofessionals, professionals and skilled tradesmen.[9] The heavy representation of middle-class Black men at the march suggests that a broad reservoir of racial consciousness continues to exist among this important segment of the Black population.[10]

The policy goals of the march contained a pronounced political slant. Organizers of the march expressed the desire to see the mass mobilization in Washington result in highly successful voter education, registration, and turnout campaigns in cities, towns, and hamlets across America. Relying heavily on the concepts of Black nationalism and self-determination, march leaders sought to establish grassroots networks in local communities capable of creating permanent bases of functional power for the Black community in local, state, and national

political and governmental arenas. Thus, the Million Man March was viewed as more than a one-day demonstration, but the pivotal foundation for a wider movement that would substantially transform the distribution of societal benefits and the workings of the governmental order.[11]

Strategic Mobilization

No project of the magnitude and ambition of the Million Man March could possibly succeed without effective strategic plans for large scale mobilization. Formal planning for the march began to unfold with the recognition of Minister Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, as the leader and guiding spirit of the march. Minister Farrakhan's assumption of this role, while controversial, was a logical extension of a political career that has seen him emerge as one of the best known and most popular political figures in Black America. Minister Farrakhan is not a newcomer to the American political scene. He first rose to prominence as a devout follower of Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammed, who took the lead in denouncing Malcolm X as a traitor "worthy of death" when Malcolm broke from the ranks of the Nation of Islam to form a new organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc.[12] Upon the death of Elijah Muhammed, Farrakhan emerged as a major victor in a battle waged with Elijah Muhammed's son, Wallace Deen Muhammed, over the resources and the political image of the Nation of Islam. Clinging tightly to the mantel of Elijah Muhammed, Farrakhan rose to the summit of leadership within the Nation of Islam and ultimately within Black America as a whole. A critical step in this journey was the highly visible role he played in the 1984 Jesse Jackson presidential campaign. This opened the door of criticism for association with someone accused of anti-semitism.[13]

Despite persistent attacks on Minister Farrakhan by outside forces, including the white media, his popularity in the Black community has continued to rise. Minister Farrakhan's genius has been to recognize, like Marcus Garvey, the existence of an enduring commitment to Black nationalism among key sectors of the Black population, especially the Black poor. Minister Farrakhan speaks to the hope for deliverance that rests in the souls of millions of Black people who possess a strong sense of racial pride and consciousness. In the 1990s, Minister Farrakhan has emerged as a popular and formidable force because he evokes in his speeches symbols of defiance and liberation. Further, he evinces a fighting spirit that harkens back to the militant politics of Black leaders such as William Monroe Trotter, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, and Fannie Lou Hamer. Clearly, masses of Blacks are looking for leaders who are willing to stand up and defend the interest of the race against the unvarnished attacks emanating out of Washington.[14] Minister Farrakhan has demonstrated an uncommon willingness to talk in fighting terms—to tell it like it is. In doing so, he has appealed to a broad array of Black citizens across class lines.

The idea of a massive demonstration by Black men in Washington did not originate with Minister Farrakhan but was first broached in a speech in Chicago by Reverend Hycel Taylor of Evanston, Illinois and later reinforced by conversations between Minister Farrakhan and Reverend James Bevel, a protege of Dr. Martin Luther King during the heyday of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Eventually this idea crystallized into the concept of the Million Man March. Minister Farrakhan teamed with Dr. Benjamin Chavis, former executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and director of the National African American Leadership Committee, to transform plans for the march into a program of action. A formal call for the march was made at a summit meeting of Black leaders in Washington, D.C. in November 1994. Under the guidance of Minister Farrakhan, a massive mobilization campaign was launched by the Nation of Islam. Across the country Minister Farrakhan began holding huge rallies for Black men only. The enthusiastic response to the meetings by a cross-section of the Black male population convinced Minister Farrakhan that the Million Man March in the nation's capital was very much within the realm of possibility.

Minister Farrakhan's efforts alone would not, of course, be enough to assure the success of the march. The pivotal key to the march's success would be the generation of enthusiastic support for the march by masses of Black men across the country. The process of grassroots mobilization was promoted at two levels. First, a National Million Man March Organizing Committee was formed, composed of representatives of a wide assortment of national organizations, as well as community activists and scholars. The heart of the grassroots mobilization effort was at the local level where local organizing committees were established in more than 400 cities.[15]

In local communities the drum beat for the march was carried forth by a host of institutions including newspapers, radio stations, fraternities and sororities, professional organizations, colleges and universities, factories, banks, and hospitals.[16] Although displaying in its early stages signs of organizational disunity and ineffectiveness, the grassroots effort was eventually successful in transforming the campaign for the march into an emotional crusade. In this regard Reverend Willie F. Wilson, pastor of the Union Temple Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. recalled:

> I personally felt that there was a need for less discussion and more doing. Therefore, I re-organized the men of Union Temple Baptist Church along with a few men from other churches, to get out in the streets and sign up men for the March.
>
> To my utter amazement, there was an electrifying enthusiasm out in the streets. We didn't have to prompt, cajole or beg anybody to sign up. Wives signed up their husbands, mothers signed up their sons and men joyfully signed up on their own. We went into barber

shops, went to street corners, and stood in malls. Everywhere we went the response was overwhelming. We signed up over 100,000 men in the Washington metropolitan area![17]

Two programmatic decisions made by the National Organizing Committee helped to stir enthusiasm for the march at the local level. First, the project would be billed not only as a march, but a "Holy Day of Atonement." This decision meant that the project would move beyond the articulation of Black grievances to embrace the concept of spiritual renewal and regeneration. Seeking to create higher levels of political consciousness in the Black community, project leaders would ask Black men to recognize past wrongs and to make amends by making a new vow of social responsibility and community uplift.[18] Second, the project would become not only a march, but a "Day of Absence." The objective of this strategy was to formally incorporate Black women into the project at the grassroots level by asking them to support the march by staying away, on the day of the march, from a host of routine activities including work, school, and the patronizing of businesses and places of entertainment.[19] Thus, the strategic plan anticipated the building of an inclusive united front in the Black community in support of the march. Given the array of diverse political interests in the Black community, the call for an united front, while emotionally appealing, was probably unrealistic.

Response of the Black Church

The most potentially damaging Black resistance to the march took the form of divisions by leaders of important Black church organizations to express open opposition to the march. The specter of opposition to the march by the institutional Black Church constituted a serious threat to the success of the national mobilization campaign. Historically, much of the organizational capacity of the Black community has resided in the influence and resources of the Black Church. March leaders were compelled to confront and come to grips with the reality that "no successful movement for improving the conditions of life for the African-American people has been mounted without the support of the church."[20] The church's control over the emotions, behavior, preferences, and resources of its members provides it with a formidable advantage over its political rivals in the Black community.

In this regard, it should be noted that Black churches played central roles in the organization and implementation of programmatic objectives during the civil rights campaigns of the 1960s.[21] Black churches have engaged in a range of activities designed to strengthen the position of the Black community in the political process, including the organization of ministerial alliances, the publication and distribution of election documents, and the selection and grooming of candidates for public office, the establishment of political action committees, the coordination and management of voter registration, and public lobbying on a variety of social, economic, and cultural issues.[22] Collectively, Black churches represent an unrivaled structure of power in the Black community. Candidates for public office clearly recognize that any effort to mobilize mass support in the Black community must begin with the cultivation of strong support from individual Black ministers and religious institutions, both separately and collectively.

Collectively, Black churches represent an unrivaled structure of power in the Black community.

The religious foundations of the march were broad and deep, representing incredible support from the Muslim community and strong support from a mosaic of Black Christian organizations. Opposition from within the ranks of the Black Church, however, was also significant. Several nationally prominent Black ministers publicly refused to endorse the march. Local organizers reported stiff opposition from a rich variety of influential Black ministers. Many ministers argued that they were compelled to oppose the march because of irreconcilable theological differences with Minister Farrakhan. They believed that they could not, as Christian ministers, endorse a march led by a minister of the Islamic faith.[23]

Many ministers also agreed with the statements of Black politicians who said they could not support Minister Farrakhan because he preached a gospel of racial hatred and social conflict. They were especially disturbed by this minister's support for Khallid Abdul Muhammed, a Nation of Islam national spokesman, who persistently denounced Jews in strident terms, as well as by reports that Minister Farrakhan had referred to Judaism as a dirty religion and Jews as bloodsuckers.

Some ministers opposed the march on political rather than theological grounds. Storm clouds have prevailed for more than a decade around the alleged invasion of Muslims into arenas formerly dominated and controlled exclusively by Black churches. Government contracts to Muslims to wage war on drugs or to provide security for housing projects have been met with resentment and protests from Black Christian ministers and their followers. Traditionally, Black churches have been the recipients of government largess as well as patronage from local political organizations.[24] The emergence of the Muslims as a strong political force threatened to weaken the stream of government benefits to Black churches and to shatter relations with external forces forged through years of strategic political interaction. Organizing activities around the Million Man March was viewed by some as an extension of the Muslim program of invasion and political dilution. If the grassroots goals of the march were realized, control over community resources would become more decentralized, further undermining the effective control over such resources by Black churches.

Opposition by some Black ministers was spawned principally by their view that support for the march would be interpreted as support for a militant campaign antithetical to the interests of their white allies. This was the prevailing view among conservative Black ministers who took great pride in the roles they played as racial diplomats. One respondent explained the opposition to the march by this element of Black ministerial leadership in the following manner:

> After 500 years of Negroness it is hard for them to stand on their own feet. They want to make Farrakhan a devil because the white man says he's a devil. If I start to upset the white man, he is going to upset me. They did not want to upset Newt Gingrich and his boys. Too many are Negroes; they did what they believed their white benefactors wanted them to do. We must expose them for what they are. They are not representing the Black community. They are preaching their own form of self-hate. They practice a form of feel good religion. It is all about preaching and having a good time. They are afraid of white people so they won't tell their members that our liberation can't be from the top down but must come from the bottom up.[25]

Reverend Willie Wilson's efforts to garner cooperation from Black ministers in Washington, D.C. revealed, in dramatic terms, the political and emotional insecurity of Black ministers who consider themselves trapped in the racial divide:

> I made a request to the largest Christian ministers' conference in Washington, D.C. to allow Minister Louis Farrakhan to speak to the several hundred pastors affiliated with that body to share the vision of the Million Man March.
>
> Needless to say, the ministers were so impressed with Minister Farrakhan's grip on Christian scriptures that they overwhelmingly voted to support the march. However, two weeks later, the Conference President explained their backpedaling this way: "Y'all don't want to say it, but we are scared!! I'm from down deep South and I know what white people will do to you. White people will kill you!! We are afraid of white folks! That's why we don't want to march."[26]

There is evidence to support the proposition that opposition to the march by some Black church forces emanated, in some measure, from the internal politics of national Black church organizations. The refusal on the part of Dr. Henry Lyons, President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, with 8.7 million members, to endorse the march was a product of the bruising battle he had to endure to win the presidency of this massive and powerful religious organization. Lyons came to power in 1994 on the heels of a major controversy surrounding the retirement from the presidency of Reverend T. J. Jemison. Jemison had threatened to run for another term despite provisions in the Convention by-laws that limited the presidency to a maximum of 10 years—the number of years he had already served. Jemison reluctantly stepped aside, naming as his heir apparent F. W. Richardson of New York. The election for the presidency, held in New Orleans in 1993, was hotly contested. Lyons announced his opposition to Richardson along with William Shaw from Pennsylvania and C.A. Clark from Texas. A major dispute emerged over whether or not voting would be by secret ballot. Additional wrangling surfaced over the issue of the supervision of the election by New Orleans election officials. When these issues were resolved, the balloting was held; the final results showed Lyons winning by 1,000 votes. The Jemison and Richardson forces refused to accept the outcome, charging in a legal suit that the election was rigged. Although the suit was resolved in Lyons' favor, the legal action delayed his formal installation as president by several months.

Lyons moved into the presidency in December 1993 determined to extricate himself from the shadow of controversy and to establish his position as a strong independent leader. It was in this context that he announced his position on a number of issues, including the Million Man March, and set forward a new operational agenda. One of his first actions at the 1994 Convention in Birmingham was to announce his opposition to the Million Man March. This decision was made principally on the basis of Lyons' need to demonstrate leadership and establish a functional power base within his organization. In retrospect, some of Lyons' supporters believed that his failure to endorse the march was a tactical blunder: "He probably should have said nothing. It is difficult to become president of 8 million people. He exercised poor judgment on this issue and damaged his relations with the progressive wing of the Convention."[27]

Lyons has sought to overcome the controversy surrounding his decision on the march by moving aggressively to implement his own community action agenda. As an answer to the Million Man March, he organized a march in Atlanta, Georgia. The march was held in November 1995. Approximately 5,000 people are reported to have attended.[28] Lyons' most important community outreach initiative has been the Trusted Partners Program. This was an idea originally included in the campaign literature of Cleo McConnell running for president of the National Laymen's Movement of the National Baptist Convention, USA. Essentially, Trusted Partners is a program designed to get Black Christian men involved in the process of bringing young Black boys to manhood. Through a series of seminars, one-on-one counseling sessions, and planned activities such as field trips, Baptist laymen are given an opportunity to establish

close personal relations with young Black men at a crucial turning point in their lives. The central objective is to provide alternatives for young Black men to the urban street culture, alternatives that will motivate them to stay in school and build for themselves stable, productive patterns of development in the broader society.[29] Although Lyons is aware that this program may overlap with some of the youth programs in the Black community already in place, he is convinced that the Black Church is in a better position to accomplish the goals of Trusted Partners than any other community institution.

Conclusion

The Million Man March was, in many ways, a watershed event in the political history of African Americans. Its crowning accomplishment was the bringing together of more than one million Black men in a spirit of peace, unity, reconciliation, atonement and renewal. The symbolism of one million Black Men massed in Washington conveyed to the world a number of critical messages:

> *That in 1995 Black America would not allow white America to choose and sanction its leaders.*
>
> *That Black people had sufficient leadership skill and logistical capability to pull off a march of unprecedented size and complexity.*
>
> *That millions of Black men are politically conscious and politically astute.*
>
> *That all Black men are not thugs, hoodlums, and criminals.*
>
> *That Black people are capable of financing their own liberation struggles.*
>
> *That special bonds of fellowships existed between Black men across class and ideological lines.*
>
> *That Black people are not prepared to accept the consequences ot the Republican Revolution or the Democratic Party's abandonment to social justice, without a militant response.*

The negative response of some elements of Black church leadership to the march sheds penetrating light on the continuing existence of decisive tendencies in the internal political environment of the Black community. These tendencies serve notice that much work remains to be done if the spirit of the Million Man March is to be transformed into an effective program of action in the service of African liberation.

Notes

[1]Within twenty-four hours after the conclusion of the march, the issue of the actual number of persons in attendance surfaced as a matter of major controversy. Initially, the National Park Service provided an official estimate of 400,000. After leaders of the march complained about an undercount the official estimate was raised to 850,000. The Million Man March Organizing Committee held to an estimate of well over 1 million. For those of us in attendance, there was no doubt that the goal of 1 million was easily surpassed. For the estimate of 1.2 million see Michael H. Cottman, *Million Man March* (New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1995), 9.

[2]Cornel West, "Historical Event," in Haki R. Madhubuti and Maulana Karenga (Eds.) *Million Man March/Day of Absence: A Commemorative Anthology* (Chicago: Third World Press; Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1996), 98.

[3]The adoption of this line of political argument was not an overnight development; but the product of strategies crafted by both major political parties to use the issues of race, rights and taxes as mechanisms for producing electoral majorities in key political contests. For an exceptionally insightful analysis of Democratic and Republican racial strategies see Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991).

[4]Lucius J. Barker and Mack H. Jones, *African Americans and the American Political System*, 3rd Edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994), 32-43.

[5]Charshee McIntyre, "Why Focus on the Men?" in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, 114-115.

[6]National Million Man March/Day of Absence Organizing Committee, *Mission Statement: The Million Man March/Day of Absence* (Washington, D.C.: National Million Man March/Day of Absence Organizing Committee, 1995), 1.

[7]Ibid., 12.

[8]Ishmael Reed, "Buck Passing: The Media, Black Men, O.J. and the Million Man March," in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, 133.

[9]Gerald S. Norde, 1996. A Sociological Study of the Million Man March. Working paper, Central State University, Xenia, Ohio.

[10]See Ellis Cose, *The Rage of the Privileged Class* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993); Lawrence Otis Graham, *Member of the Club: Reflections on Life in a Racially Polarized World* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995).

[11]Maulana Karenga, "The March, Day of Absence and the Movement," in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, 5-7.

[12]Arthur J. Magida, *Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 80-83.

[13]Some organizations and their representatives accused Reverend Farrakhan of calling Judaism a dirty religion and referring to Hitler as a man who was "wickedly" great. See Magida, *Prophet of Rage*, 143-148.

[14]Ron Daniels, "The Meaning of the Million Man March and Day of Absence," in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, 83-84.

[15]Conrad W. Worrill, "Beyond the Million Man March," in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, 81.

[16]Ibid., 80.

[17]Willie F. Wilson, "The Miracle of the Million Man March," in *Million Man March/Day of Absence*, 57-58.

[18]National Million Man March/Day of Absence Organizing Committee, *Mission Statement*, 56.

[19]Ibid., 15-17.

[20]Andrew Billingsley, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African American Families* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 350.

[21]See William E. Nelson, Jr., *The Role of the Black Church in Politics* (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1987), 20-26.

[22]Ibid., 20-26.

[23]Conversation with a Black Baptist minister in Columbus, Ohio (April 1996).

[24]Nelson, *The Role of the Black Church in Politics*, 34-35.

[25]Conversation with a Black Baptist minister in Columbus, Ohio (April 1996).

[26]Wilson, *The Miracle of the Million Man March*, 58.

[27]Conversation with a Black Baptist minister in Lincoln, Nebraska (May 1996).

[28]Conversation with a Black Baptist layman in Los Angeles, California (May 1996).

[29]Ibid.

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Religious Institutions and Black Political Activism

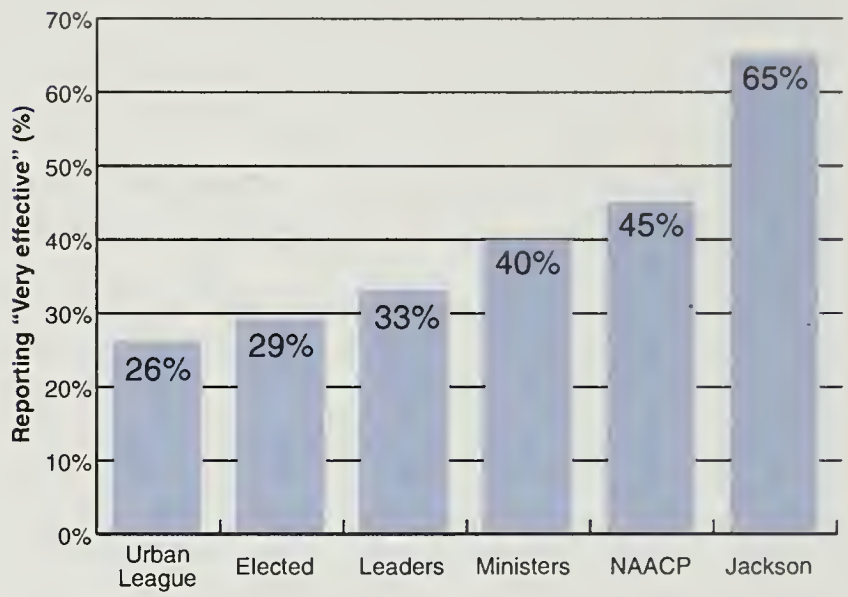
by Frederick C. Harris

During the modern Civil Rights Movement religious institutions provided critical organizational resources for protest mobilization.[1] As Aldon Morris' extensive study of the southern Civil Rights Movement noted, the Black Church served as the "organizational hub of Black life," providing the resources that fostered—along with other indigenous groups and institutions—collective protest against a system of white domination in the South.[2]

As an institution that is indigenous to African-American communities, Black churches are intricately connected to various kinds and sources of activism. Their communication networks capacity to promote social interaction, provide material resources, and give individuals the opportunity to learn organizing skills are critical elements for successful social movement or political mobilization. Perhaps most importantly, their sustainability over both time and physical space all combine to make churches the only Black institutions consistently promoting the collective resistance to social and economical inequalities by African Americans. Black churches have performed these functions throughout several historical periods, shifting political alliances and interests, and vastly differing social and economic contexts for activism. Despite the record of political achievement of the Black Church based on these kinds of resources, some scholars and activists have raised concerns about the influence of the clergy over the Black electorate and its involvement in politics. However, these concerns may be displaced as exaggerated at least based on the views of congregation members. Although a 1991 Chicago Area Survey showed that among Black church members more than half reported candidate visits at their churches, a 1980 NBC News/Associated Poll suggests that few ministers, Black or white, specifically endorse political candidates. Ninety-seven percent of whites (N=2098) and 92 percent of Blacks (N=178) reported that they had not been asked by a religious leader to vote for a specific candidate in that year's fall election. An overwhelming majority of respondents (more than 80 percent of both Blacks and whites) also felt that an endorsement of a candidate by a religious leader would have no effect on their choice of candidates.[3]

On the other hand, both Black parishioners and political entrepreneurs view Black clerics as indigenous leaders. A 1984 *USA Today* survey asked: "A variety of groups and people occupy leadership roles within the Black community. For each person or groups I mention, please tell me how effective you think [they] are as leaders—very effective, somewhat effective, or not very effective?" Figure 1 shows the "very effective" responses for six leadership categories mentioned in this order: local Black office holders, national political leaders, the NAACP, the Urban League, Black ministers and clergy, and Jesse Jackson. Jesse Jackson, a minister-politician, ranked first (65%), and Black ministers (40%) as a group ranked second to the NAACP (45%) as the most effective leaders. Black ministers were perceived more effective than national Black political leaders (33%), local Black elected officials (29%), and the National Urban League (26%), a civil rights organization. The clerical leadership category even rivals the oldest and most prominent civil rights organization for African Americans, the NAACP.

Figure 1



Perceived Efficacy of Black Leadership as Community Leaders: Groups and Individuals (*N=280*)

Assuredly some commentators do criticize the appropriateness of Black clergy as representatives of Black interests in the American polity; on the other hand, many politicians certainly woo the activist clergy within Black communities as a means to legitimize and garner support for their political goals. Moreover, scholars C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya's survey of over 2,000 Black clergy between 1978 and 1984 reveals that Black ministers of the various mainstream denominations overwhelmingly approve of an activist ministry.[4]

"...there is broad support and consensus in the Black community...for a social prophecy role for Black churches."

Over 90 percent of Black ministers, independent of age, education, and denominational affiliation, supported cleric involvement in civil rights demonstrations, and religious leaders expressing their views on social and political issues.[5] Lincoln and Mamiya also cite a Gallup survey on a similar question in 1968 that showed nonwhites more supportive than whites of ministers speaking out on social and political issues. Finally, they

found in a 1986 survey of African Methodist Episcopal Church leaders that nearly 90 percent supported cleric involvement in social issues, while only 3 percent agreed that churches should keep out of political matters altogether.[6] Lincoln and Mamiya conclude from these surveys that "there is broad support and consensus in the Black community, both within and without the church, among clergy and laity, for a social prophecy role for Black churches. The attitude is pervasive that churches should be involved in and express their views on everyday social and political issues." They further conclude, "It is also clear that Black people generally support a much more activist role for their churches than do whites."[7]

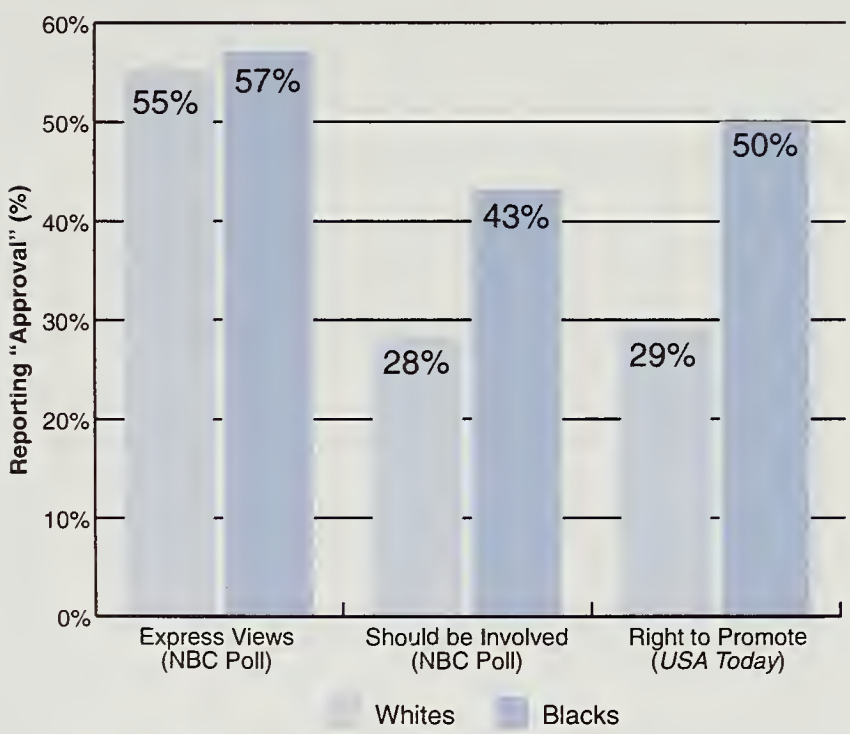
Although Lincoln and Mamiya's extensive survey reveals a consensus among Black clerics in the post-civil rights period, they may overstate the case by extending this consensus to African Americans as a whole. Two surveys at approximately this time measured popular attitudes toward church-based political activism. The NBC/Associated Press survey previously-mentioned asked two questions: "Should the churches and members of the clergy express their views on day-to-day social questions, or should they keep out of social matters?" and "What about politics? Do you think the churches and members of clergy should be involved in politics, like backing a candidate for public office, or don't you think so?"[8] The September 1984 *USA Today* Poll of over 1,200 registered voters also posed: "In general, do you think it is right or wrong for religious leaders to promote a particular political point of view during religious services?"

Figure 2 shows affirmative responses to all three questions by race. Blacks and whites equally approved of churches and clergy expressing their views on social issues, although Blacks approved slightly more than whites (57% compared to 55%, with about a third of both Black and white respondents stating that churches and clergy should not express their views on social issues). However, Blacks and whites differed more dramatically in regard to the explicit involvement of religious institutions in politics. While less than a third of whites thought that churches or clergy should be able to back political candidates (28%) and that religious leaders had a right to promote a particular point of view during religious services (29%), more than two-fifths (43%) of Blacks approved of such involvement and half (50%) approved of clerics promoting a political point of view during religious services.

The Effects of Black Churches on Direct Mobilization

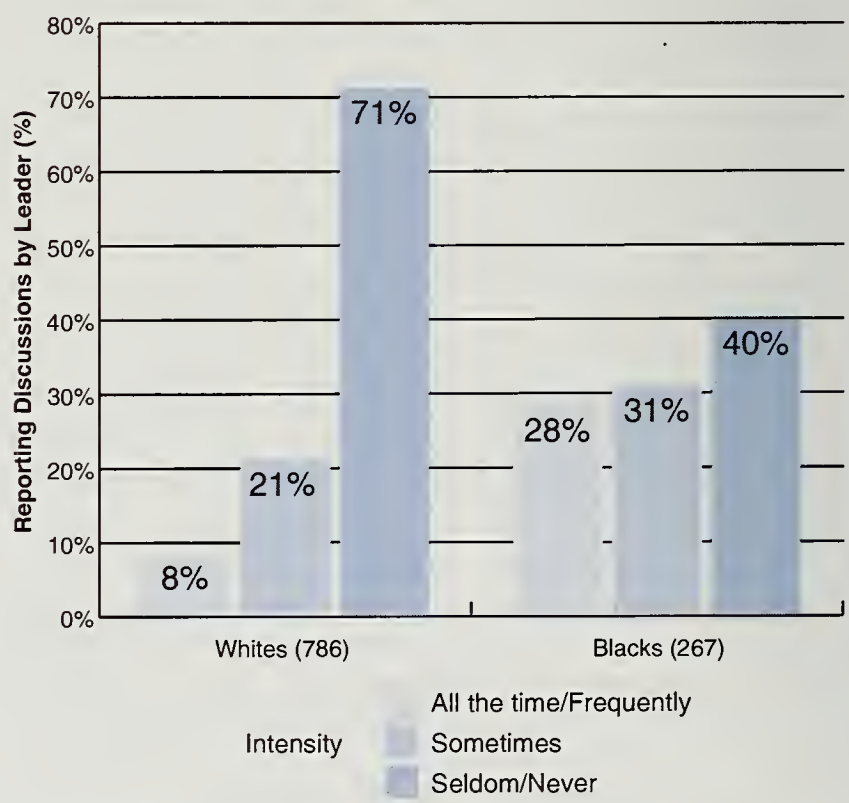
The Black-white differences in approval of church-based political activism may simply reflect racial differences in the incidence of that activism. Those differences in approval may also reflect racial differences in the actual effect of church-based stimuli on political participation. The 1984 *USA Today* Poll asked about the frequency of political discussions during religious services: "How often does your (minister/priest/rabbi) discuss political issues as part of the service?" Figure 3 reveals striking racial variations among churchgoers. Blacks were three times more likely (28%) than whites (8%) to report that their religious leaders discussed politics all the time or frequently. They were also more likely than whites (31% compared to 21%) to report that such discussions took place "sometimes." Nearly three-fourths, or 71%, of whites reported that their clerics seldom or never discussed political issues during religious services compared to only two-fifths (40%) of Black respondents.

Figure 2



Public Opinion on Religious Leaders Becoming Directly Involved in Political Matter, by Race

Figure 3



Frequency of Clerical Discussion of Politics, by Race 1984

Conclusion

Religious institutions within African-American communities are important resources for Black political mobilization. These resources include cleric appeals, candidate contacts at religious services, church-sponsored political forums and rallies, group endorsements by ministers and religious groups, and fundraising for political candidates. These sources of information and activism have deep historical roots. Black religious institutions also serve as resources for political entrepreneurs by providing campaign funds and workers and a mobilizing source of voters. Although the direct involvement of Black religious institutions produces some ambivalence in the Black population, by and large, Black clerics have a strong commitment to political activism and Black churchgoers generally approve of that commitment.

Notes

[1]Douglas McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[2]Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984).

[3]NBC News/Associated Press National Poll (October 1980).

[4]C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990).

[5]Ibid., 225.

[6]Ibid., 226.

[7]Ibid., 226.

[8]NBC News/Associated Press National Poll (October 1980).

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The Black Church: The 'Cocoon' for the Black 'Butterfly' and the African-American Music Idiom

by Hubert Walters

An interesting phenomenon takes place in the world of nature when the larvae of the Monarch butterfly goes through the period of metamorphosis in the protective cover of the cocoon, and emerges as one of the most beautiful butterflies in North America. This phenomenon seems to be an appropriate metaphor to use in our discussion of the African-American Music Idiom. This idiom was developed and nurtured in the "cocoon" of the Black Church, while undergoing the "metamorphosis" of slavery, second-class citizenship, and segregation and emerge as the beautiful Black musical, "Butterfly," which stands at the very foundation of the only true American music. A casual look at the world of popular music would reveal that African-American music and musicians are being imitated the world over. As Dave Clark, the leader of a British Group in the fifties called, The Dave Clark Five, stated in an interview almost three decades ago, "we are all trying to sing colored."[1]

It is also becoming clearer, that this "*colored*" attitude of singing was developed in the environment of the Black Church. Leroi Jones stated in 1963,

> The early black Christian churches or the pre-church "praise houses" became the social focal points of Negro life. The relative autonomy of the developing Negro Christian religious gathering made it one of the only areas in the slave's life where he was relatively free of the white man's domination. The "praise nights" or "prayer meetings," were also the only times when the Negro felt he could express himself as freely and emotionally as possible.[2]

Rock and roll is another music that effects this kind of historical background. Rock and roll was not really a new type of popular music, for as Fats Domino, a popular Black recording artist stated, "what they call Rock and Roll, I have been singing for fifteen years as Rhythm and Blues."[3]

During the 1960s, there was an increase in demand for materials relevant to Black cultural experiences due to widespread Black protests. These materials suggest that there is such a thing as an "African-American Aesthetic," and that this "esthetic" has its roots deep in the soil of Africa; and contrary to the opinions of many, these Africanisms survived the horrors of American slavery.[4] As Leroi Jones reminded us,

> It is certainly immediately apparent that all forms of political and economic thought which were two of the most profound sophistication's of African culture, were suppressed immediately. The extremely intricate political, social, and economic systems of the West Africans were, of course, done away with completely in their normal manifestations. The much praised "legal systems" known could not function, except very informally, in the cotton fields of America. The technology of the Africans, iron-working, wood carving, weaving, etc., died out quickly in the United States. Almost every aspect of African culture took a new less obvious form or was wiped out altogether.... Only religion (and magic) and the arts were not completely submerged by Euro-American concepts.[5]

Religion and art certainly are important aspects of any culture and it is a well-documented fact that the transplanted African brought with them some form of religion. It is also a well-documented fact that, "during the years 1702–1705 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent clergymen to the colonies to minister to the slaves and to convert them to Christianity."[6] The missionaries believed that converting the slaves to Western Christianity would make them more "docile" and "humble," thereby producing a more obedient slave. The missionaries devised "slave catechisms to insure that the message of Black inferiority and divinely ordained white domination would be instilled in the slaves."[7] One such catechism might read as follows:

> *Question:* What did God make you for?
>
> *Answer:* To make a crop.
>
> *Question:* What is the meaning of "Thou shalt not commit adultery?"
>
> *Answer:* To serve the heavenly Father, and our earthly master, obey our overseer, and not steal anything.[8]

According to Cone, "it does not take a seminary education to know that white missionaries were distorting the gospel in order to defend the enslavement of Blacks but white Europeans did not succeed; and Black history is the record of their failure."[9] And of course nowhere is the record the failure reflected better than in the time-honored songs known as spirituals, the first real body of music developed by the transplanted African, and the body of song that is the foundation for all other types of Black music created in the United States.

The Black Church during the period of slavery was known as the "invisible church." This church was not located in a building as such, but in the areas far away from the plantation big house, where slaves assembled at night and developed those songs based on the Old Testament stories of the struggles of the Hebrew children in captivity and eventual freedom in the lands of Egypt and Babylon. Many of these songs were based on African melodies as well as melodies picked up from the missionaries and plantation owners, but they were tinged with a particular "African-American Attitude (the idiom)," towards the elements of music, namely melody, rhythm, and harmony. Following the Emancipation years, 1863–1865, the famous Fisk Jubilee Singers presented their version of these songs on a tour that took them to England and other foreign countries during the years 1871–72. That was the first time that the newly developed "African-American Music Idiom" was heard outside the United States.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, some Blacks were allowed to worship in the same buildings with whites, but confined to sit in the balconies. The story of Richard Allen and his friends being removed bodily from their seats at the Old St. George Methodist Church in Philadelphia is well known. Incidents like these were the reasons that many Blacks began to establish their own churches. With the establishment of their own congregations Blacks were free to worship as they pleased and in their own manner. The earliest permanent congregation in the nation was the First African Baptist Church at Savannah, Georgia, founded in 1788 by Andrew Bryan (1737–1812), who was ordained a Baptist minister that year.[10]

...[Black] music is reflective of whatever condition Black people find themselves in...

According to Leroi Jones, "blues began in slavery, and it is from that peculiar institution, as it was known euphemistically, that blues did find its particular form. And if slavery dictated certain aspects of the blues form and content, so did the so-called Emancipation and its subsequent problems dictate the path blues would take."[11] Following the Emancipation, Blacks were allowed to travel outside of the south and of course they took their music with them. The "idiom" now began to take on more "secular" aspects as Black music has always been a social art and the music is reflective of whatever condition Black people find themselves in at that particular moment and time.

Following the end of WWI and WWII, large numbers of Blacks began moving to the large cities in the north. In the early 1930s, Thomas A. Dorsey, who was a musician at the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Detroit, began composing what has come to be known as Gospel Music. Dorsey was an exceptional musician and was comfortable in writing and performing African-American music in many styles. His most famous composition is entitled, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." Prior to his composing this song, Dorsey was the accompanist for Ma Rainey, one of the famous "blues" singers of this period. Dorsey was able to apply the musical idioms that were developed in his hometown church in Georgia, to the new and different social situations found in the larger urban cities. The result is something that Michael W. Harris calls "the gospel blues."[12] This might be an appropriate term to describe the "idiom" as it is used in this context.

If one listens closely, the African-American attitude towards melody, rhythm, and harmony in the blues is quite similar to these elements in the gospel song. It is clear that both the spirituals and the blues were nurtured within the confines of the Black Church. It was here that the singers applied their unusual vocal qualities and harmonies of existing song and to those created from their own imagination. The "sliding" and "slurring" effects in African-American music were developed in the Black Church. Listen to any recording of Aretha Franklin singing "Respect" and then listen to her rendition of "How I Got Over" from the great 1972 recording, "Amazing Grace." A keen musical ear will observe the unusual vocal gymnastics characteristic of Aretha, in both of these recordings. It must be pointed out that Aretha did not learn to sing at one of the nation's music conservatories. Aretha developed and sharpened her art in her father's church long before she became a recording star. In fact Reverend C. L. Franklin, Aretha's late father said, "if you really want to know the truth, Aretha has never really left the church."[13]

It is a rather interesting fact that the growth and dissemination of the "African-American Music Idiom," has occurred almost simultaneously with the growth and development of the recording industry. Black musicians were among the earliest to record their music. "The earliest recordings of Black musicians that can be documented came in 1901 when Victor Talking Machine Company recorded Bert Williams and George Walker singing popular songs and songs from Black musicals to the period."[14] The earliest recording of a Black female singer took place on February 14, 1920, when Mamie Smith sang, "You Can't Keep a Good Man Down" and "This Thing Called Love."[15] By this time, the idiom was popular throughout the nation, and recording companies began to label recordings by Black artists as "race records" to distinguish them from recordings made by white artists.[16] In many ways, the recording industry has been a blessing and a curse to the idiom. Without the industry, many people would not have heard this beautiful "butterfly." On the other hand, the idiom in most cases, has always been presented to the public by white "imitators" of the idiom, who were always able to reap huge financial profits from their efforts because of the peculiar racial character of the American public in the early years, as well as today.[17] The category of "race records" was given to recordings made by Blacks from 1920 until June 25, 1949, when *Billboard*, a music trade magazine, introduced the term rhythm and blues to define

the Black popular music idiom. Rhythm and blues had its origins in the Black Church also. Many of the rhythm and blues artists of this period were formerly members of Gospel singing groups like the Dixie Hummingbirds and the Soul Stirrers. Sam Cooke and Jackie Wilson were formerly members of these groups.

The idiom has left its impression on what we shall call Euro-American Music to identify, European Classical music that has been the foundation of academic music study since the early 1800s, in America. On December 2, 1923, Roland Hayes (1881–1976), an African-American concert singer from Georgia, became the first Black artist to perform at the famous Boston Symphony Hall. On this program, Hayes performed a group of French, German, and Italian art songs, and closed with a group of Negro Spirituals. This concert was the beginning of a long and illustrious career for him, on the great concert stages of the world. He was really the first great American concert singer.

For many years Hayes' contributions to American music remained unnoticed, but in January and February of 1996, the city of Boston celebrated his accomplishments in the world of music with a series of concerts and related activities. For our purpose here it is important to note that Hayes and his family were members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Boston, for many years. Hayes had very positive ideas regarding the importance of Negro folk music. He once said in an interview:

> My people have been very shy about singing their crude little songs before white folks. They thought that they would be laughed at—and they were! And so they came to despise their own heritage if, as I truly believe, there is purpose and plan in my life, it is this: that I shall have my share in rediscovering the qualities we have almost let slip away from us; and that we shall make our special contribution only a humble one perhaps, but our very own human experience.[18]

Were he here today, Mr. Hayes would be amazed to see that this humble contribution has become the foundation for the truly American music, and indeed the "esthetic base" of this magnificent period in the history of music which Henry Pleasants and many, many others have labeled, The Afro-American Epoch.

Today, the Black Church is still the only place that the descendants of Africans who were made slaves in America, can truly be free. A close look at the top American musicians in the popular field will show that a large majority of them received their early music training in the Black Church. Academic institutions are beginning to include the study of the great body of music in their curriculum as an integral component of intellectual understanding of music: thus, the metaphor of the "cocoon." The cocoon is the silky and fibrous case in which the larvae of the butterfly spins about themselves to shelter it during the pupa stage. With time and patience, and great struggle, "metamorphosis" takes place, and the beautiful butterfly floats above the earth. The African-American music idiom, was developed and nurtured in the "cocoon" of the Black Church. In the fullness of time, the idiom overcame the "metamorphosis" of slavery, second-class citizenship, and segregation and exploitation described in this essay, and emerged as the beautiful "Black Butterfly" energizing the "aesthetic" which is at the base of African-American culture, and today, even world culture.

Black Butterfly

Awakening

A genius has been asleep too long
A people with a beauty rich and strong
A heritage that rates second to none

Original

Your qualities don't change them to fit in
Now that you're on top just keep rising
Experience new life be born again

What's going on
Truth not revealed unless you choose to see
Past generations lost in history
To hide our culture and identity
Keep your pride
You can't be another color butterfly
So when you shine let everybody see your light
'Cause you know out of sight means out of mind

Black Butterfly
You can do most anything your heart desires
Freedom comes with understanding who you are
It's time too reclaim your place among the stars
Spread your wings and fly.[19]

Notes

[1]*American Music: From Folk to Jazz and Pop*, prod. and dir. ABC: Mcgraw-Hill, Video.

[2]Leroi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. (New York: Morrow Quill, 1965), 40-41. [Leroi Jones changed his name to Amiri Baraka.]

[3]*Rock and Roll the Early Years*, prod. Archive Film Production, Burbank, CA, 1984, Video.

[4]Kariamu Welsh-Asante (Ed.) *The African Aesthetic* (London: Greenwood Press, 1993).

[5]Jones, *Blues People*, 15-16.

[6]Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), 38.

[7]James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York: Maryknoll, 1991), 38.

[8]Ibid., 23.

[9]Ibid., 24-25.

[10]Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 72.

[11]Jones, *Blues People*, 50-51.

[12]Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[13]Aretha Franklin and James Cleveland, "How I Got Over," *Amazing Grace*, Atlantic 2-906-2.

[14]Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 304.

[15]Ibid., 365.

[16]See, Brian Rust, *The American Record Label Book* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1978); Steve Chapple and Reebee Garafalo, *Rock and Roll is Here to Pay* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977).

[17]See, "Black Roots and White Fruits," in *Rock and Roll is Here to Pay*.

[18]Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 402.

[19]Sound of Blackness, *Africa to America The Journey of the Drum*, Perspective Records. Manufactured and distributed by A&M Records, 1994, 31454 9006 2.

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Burning Hate: The Torching of Black Churches

by Salim Muwakkil

Nearly 100 predominantly Black churches have been torched since 1990, their congregations forced to watch in horror as the very centers of their communities were consumed by the flames of racial hatred. Americans of all races have recoiled in shock—and often with genuine shame—as the attacks have escalated in past months. But despite President Clinton's call for interracial solidarity and the belated appeals of white evangelical Christian leaders for racial reconciliation, many African Americans are left wondering whether white America grasps the meaning and significance of this reign of terror.

So far, police have arrested 34 suspects in connection with the arson attacks. All but two of the suspects are white, according to figures compiled by the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), an Atlanta-based hate crimes watchdog group. Investigators suspect that most of the attacks have been random acts of vandalism and not part of a conspiracy. But there's little solace in that distinction.

"The conspiracy is racism itself," says Noah Chandler, a CDR research associate. The Reverend Jesse Jackson of the National Rainbow Coalition/Operation PUSH attributes the burnings to a "cultural conspiracy" that reinforces long-held racial biases, inspired at least in part by the racebaiting rhetoric of the political right. Jackson has urged Clinton to convene a White House conference on racial justice. "We can't just focus on the fire and not the fuel," he says.

"This is the most serious thing that I think has happened in the South in years—far more serious than the dollar value of a church building that is burned," says Morris Dees, co-founder of the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center, another group that monitors racist groups. "Symbolically, the burning of Black churches is more important than the World Trade Center bombing." Unlike the other investigators, Dees maintains that many of the church burnings are part of an explicit conspiracy.

Last June [1995], two Black churches in rural Greeleyville, S.C., were destroyed by fire, and two white men are now jailed on arson charges. Dees' center has filed a civil lawsuit on behalf of one of the churches, alleging that the men acted under the direction of the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a Klan splinter group. The suit seeks compensatory damages for the destruction of church property and punitive damages to "punish the defendants for their intentional and malicious acts and to deter others from engaging in such acts." Dees' group has been successful in the civil prosecution of the Klan and other hate groups. In 1987, the center won a $7 million verdict against another KKK splinter group, the United Klans of America, for lynching a black man in Alabama, and in 1990 the group won a $12 million ruling against the White Aryan Resistance in connection with the murder of a black man in Oregon. In both cases, the punitive damages effectively put the groups out of business. If any of the 30 other white suspects held in connection with recent church burnings are linked to racist organizations, those groups, too, will be vulnerable to civil action.

The cloud of this tragedy may have a few other silver linings as well. Expressions of support in words and dollars have poured into aid organizations from a wide variety of sources: The National Council of Churches, which has led the effort to focus national attention on the church burnings, has established a fund and mobilized support to help the victimized congregations rebuild their churches. As news of the burnings has spread, groups spanning the religious spectrum have offered their support and assistance, some establishing funds of their own. So moved was Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, that he offered "repentance" for the past racial sins of white evangelical Christians and called for a day of national racial reconciliation. Reed pledged to raise at least $1 million to help rebuild African-American churches that have been burned. "It is a painful truth that the white evangelical church was not only on the sidelines but in many cases on the wrong side of the most central struggle for social justice in this century," he said during a June meeting with black ministers and representatives of the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League and other groups called to marshal support for the destroyed churches. "We come today bearing the burden of that past, with broken hearts, a repentant spirit and ready hands to fight this senseless violence," Reed said. The coalition dubbed July 14, 1996 "Racial Reconciliation Sunday" for the 100,000 churches on the group's mailing list, and he urged members to donate generously to the rebuilding fund.

But the involvement of the Christian Coalition, perhaps the most powerful political force on the religious right, has been greeted with skepticism by others involved in the rebuilding effort. "Reconciliation requires something much stronger than charity," said the Reverend Joseph Lowery, director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "Charity can be motivated by pity, but love embraces justice." Lowery said the root of the problem is racism, not the burning of churches, "and the Christian Coalition's right-wing agenda has contributed to the very climate of negativism." With his gift for metaphor, Jesse Jackson nicely summed up many activists' view of the Christian Coalition's role. "We shouldn't get tripped up by people like Ralph Reed, who seed the clouds of racism to make intolerance rain and then offer us an umbrella."

This article appears courtesy of In These Times. *It originally appeared in the July 8–21, 1996 edition titled, "Burning Hate: The Recent Spate of Black Church Burnings Confronts America with Racist Past and Present." Since the writing of this article, the number of Black churches set on fire or bombed has increased to more than 200 churches.*

Despite the outpouring of support for the rebuilding effort, few organizations seem willing to trace the problem of church burnings to the racist roots of American culture. In a sense, the absence of any organized conspiracy to burn churches is more disturbing than an organized conspiracy would be; it means we live in an era when individuals, unconnected to one another or with organized white supremacist groups, consider burning Black churches an act worthy of emulation.

Indeed, the burning of Black churches has historically been a common mode of white supremacist violence. "There have been attacks on Black churches ever since there have been Black churches in this country," notes C. Eric Lincoln, professor emeritus of religion at Duke University and author of the 1996 book, *Coming Through The Fire: Surviving Race and Place in America*. Since African Americans were allowed few opportunities to exercise autonomy and to affirm their culture, Black churches became centers for activities that were both sacred and secular. Because of their mobilizing and ennobling functions, these churches antagonized many whites.

...we live in an era when individuals...consider burning Black churches an act worthy of emulation.

The first recorded torching of a Black church occurred in South Carolina in 1822, Lincoln writes. In 1829, white mobs torched churches in Cincinnati's African-American ward, and Philadelphia's churches became constant targets of disgruntled whites during the mid-1800s. In their campaign to terrorize blacks into submission to white rule after the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan habitually targeted Black churches. Only during the civil rights era, when the nation recoiled at the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four young girls, did most of white America learn of this ugly legacy. The motivations for that attack were the same as they have always been: By attacking Black churches, white supremacists were striking at the very heart of the movement for racial equality.

The burning of a Black church has always been much more than a question of destroying its property value; only at the level of symbol can we understand its significance. "This is about more than just bricks and mortar," explains Ron Daniels, executive director of the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, an organization enlisted by the National Council of Churches to serve as part of its Emergency Response Team. The council called this group of organizers together to help mobilize support for the affected congregations, to monitor official investigations of the fires and to help catch the culprits. "We are vigorously pushing the issue of prosecution," says Daniels. "The issue is not just rebuilding the churches but also social justice, and we intend to ensure that justice prevails." Daniels says his group is considering adopting Dees' civil litigation strategy in cases in several Southern states.

Daniels echoes others who blame a social climate rife with race-baiting for the upsurge in racist terrorism. "The black community—through the myths of welfare, affirmative action and crime—has become the scapegoat for the pressures and dislocations that are being felt in the larger United States economy. We have a bunch of angry white males who are being told to look for answers in white supremacy and domestic terrorism. We must confront that."

President Bill Clinton has forcefully denounced the church burnings and created a special task force to investigate them, but he has not labeled the fires "domestic terrorism," which would mobilize the additional resources that critics argue are necessary to mount an effective probe. "In New York City, when the World Trade Center was bombed, a piece of scrap metal was enough to indict 10 men—that's how vigorous that investigation was," says Daniels. Similarly, the investigation of the bombing in Oklahoma City yielded two suspects within weeks. "Why haven't we seen those kind of investigations with the church bombings?" Daniels asks.

Federal authorities ought to classify the church burnings as suspected domestic terrorist incidents, argues Tyrone Powers, a former FBI agent who has followed the church burnings closely. "The attorney general's guidelines for terrorism are 'the unlawful use of force or violence, committed by a group or groups of two or more individuals, against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives.'"

But Powers, the author of *Eyes to My Soul: The Rise or Decline of a Black FBI Agent*, a memoir of his nine years in an agency he characterizes as pervasively racist, detects familiar political motives in this foot-dragging. If word got around during the 1996 Summer Olympics that the same kind of racist terrorism that characterized the Old South was still at large, he maintains, Atlanta's international reputation as the center of the "New South" would be seriously tarnished. Clinton has been talking tough about "hunting terrorism down wherever it is," Powers says, but now that the world is coming to Atlanta "he's been hoisted on his own petard."

When Clinton flew to South Carolina in early June [1995] to visit the ruins of the Mount Zion AME church in Greeleyville, S.C., Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour called the visit "shameless, transparent politics." House Majority Leader Dick Armey joined in the criticism, and even Republican presidential contender Bob Dole accused Clinton of politicizing the burnings. The Congressional Black Caucus has mildly praised Clinton's efforts to address the burnings—but only by way of countering Republican charges that the president has exploited his visits to torched churches for

political mileage. "We think the president was right to take the bully pulpit, to take the high ground on this issue," said Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA). Polls also indicated that Clinton's action was politically popular.

By contrast, the Republican Party's reticent reaction to the burnings apparently has hurt its image. Speaking at an Iowa campaign fundraiser, former Housing Secretary Jack Kemp warned GOP leaders that their harsh criticism of the president made them look to the public like "a bunch of grumpy old men," adding cryptically, "I want the Republican Party to come across more like Ronald Reagan than Pat Buchanan." In other words, Kemp urges the GOP to disguise its racist impulses in the puerile evocations of a mythic America that kept Reagan popular. He's not calling for a public repudiation of the race-baiting tactics that promote racial attacks because the GOP owes its present prominence in the South to those very tactics. It's unlikely the party would surrender its tactical advantage just for the sake of smoother race relations. In fact, racial tensions are good for the GOP.

Now that these burnings have awakened even the long slumbering conscience of the white Christian right, a slender opportunity may be opening for more serious attempts at racial reconciliation. Of course, Ralph Reed's expression of contrition might simply be an immediate reaction to the sacrilege of flaming churches. But Reed's strong condemnation of racial animosity may be helpful in tempering the GOPs divisive racial rhetoric and discrediting social policies that are much more destructive to the African-American community than the fires.

Dees doesn't think the fires will stop until large enough rewards are offered to persuade people with information to contact authorities. Thus, as a practical matter, he recently urged the governors of nine Southern states to establish substantial reward funds—a minimum of $100,000 in each church arson. And although such practical solutions do little to attack the underlying problem of racism, they'll have to do until the nation is ready to confront the demon at its core.

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A Time to Question: The Role of the Black Church in British Society

by Paul Grant

In this essay I raise some questions concerning the role of Black faith and religious institutions in Britain. It seems to me that certain assertions made concerning the progressive nature of this role have remained unquestioned. Lest this be perceived as yet another attack on Black faith from an outsider, it will be presented in terms of an exercise in self-criticism. I will use a collection of papers on Black theology in Britain, which I co-edited, to illustrate my argument concerning the limitations of our faith-based radicalism.

Given that the aim here is less precise conceptual clarity and more broad political mapping, debates concerning the exact composition of the Black Church in Britain need not detain us. It is suffice for current purposes to say that I will use the term to refer to those denominations and fellowships that could be regarded as Black-led, as well as Black Christians involved in white-led churches. Furthermore, discussions concerning the exact ethnic or national origin of the churches are less important than the trends in their concerns, structures and responses to social injustice that seem to cut across ethnic boundaries.

One of the more discernible of these trends is the assertion that the Black Church in Britain is undergoing a period of reassessment. In terms of the Black-led churches, this tends to be presented as an "identity crisis," where churches are wrestling with a range of challenges to their traditional structures and practices. These find expression in debates about the relationship between mission defined as social justice and traditional commitments to evangelism defined as the saving of souls; and the changing demographics of the Black presence, especially the increasing class differentiation within the churches themselves and the centrality of women in church life and the possibility and purpose of theological reflection grounded in the spiritual and material experiences of life in Britain.

On the other hand, for Black Christians in white-led churches, the crisis is less that of responses to changing conditions, and more their unchanging experiences of exclusion within their own churches. Whereas for Black-led churches the question is, "Who are we now?"; for these Christians it is, "Where are we?" with a focus on the marginalization of Black experiences in the practical and spiritual lives of churches characterized by class-based, racialist and gender hierarchies. Although these formulations of crisis acknowledge external trends and factors in compounding these difficulties, central to both is the view that the crises are essentially internal to the churches themselves. Consequently, solutions gravitate towards the maintenance of community and culture within and between fellowships, rather than changing the structures and processes of the society in which the crises are rooted.

This tendency also underlies recent writing about Black Christian faith in Britain. Over and against earlier characterizations of that faith as escapist, exotic or simply primitive, contemporary writers tend to identify the Black Church as a place of actual, or potential, political, cultural and psychological emancipation. Arguments for viewing the Black Church as a site of liberation take a number of forms and differ partly in terms of whether the church is Black or white-led. For example, some suggest that the experiences of racism in the United Kingdom encouraged a radical activism similar to those of "recognized" theologies of liberation in the First and Third Worlds. This view argues that the Black-led churches' greater autonomy, self-developed infrastructure and cultural cohesiveness have allowed for a more direct and radical relationship between church and community.

Others consider that Black faith is better understood in terms of a more passive radicalism, a proto-liberatory phenomenon, which through its holistic pastoral approach and theology, sustains cultural and psychological survival over and against the forces which threaten to overwhelm Black people. Although this "war of position" view also draws on the experiences of Black-led churches, it tends to be offered by Black Christians in mainstream churches and reflects the particular structural restrictions placed upon the expression of their faith. These Christians are both blessed and cursed by a double consciousness: in the absence of real acceptance as Black people, they draw on informal networks within and without the fellowship to maintain their faith. Even so, fragmented in a variety of ways over a range of churches, there is not the quality of formal networks, organizations or leadership which would allow them an effective voice in the affairs of those churches, let alone anything more than a token presence in their respective places of power.

...Black faith is better understood in terms of a more passive radicalism...

Both of these perspectives offer the Black Church as a progressive force in British society, inspiring and sustaining, if not leading, the cause of racial and social justice. I would argue that this is to overstate the extent to which Black Christians have offered any credible challenge to the broader processes and structures of inequality at work in that society, especially over the last twenty years. In these terms, the crises experienced and articulated should be understood rather less as internal matters of identity and representation, and rather more as issues of political practice and theological engagement. Such a perspective allows us to look beyond celebrating

the church's survival in a racist society to an evaluation of its failures given the resources at its disposal and its place in minority and national life. And it is to the consideration of these failures that we now turn.

Eleven years after the election of the Conservatives in 1979 and a full ten years after the first so-called "race riots" of the 1980s, *A Time to Speak: Perspectives of Black Christians in Britain* was published under the auspices of the Black and Third World Theology Group, Evangelical Christians for Racial Justice and the Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches.[1] It was a ground-breaking publication in several ways. First of all, it was a forum for Black Christians to articulate their views independent of white control. There was a strong theme of spiritual "anti-colonialism" in the contributions: previously white academics and clerics had free rein to describe, define and delimit the activities of Black people in churches without effective opposition. The book turned this upside down and offered Black people as the subjects of history and white society the object of discussion. Secondly, it broke with the previous tradition of narrative or semi-autobiographical reflections from Black ministers and presented nascent attempts to describe and analyze the experience of Black faith in a more structured and rigorous manner. Drawing on a much wider range of contributors, especially so-called "second-generation" writers, the material reflected a breadth of concerns beyond the pastoral and spiritual, wrestling with issues ranging from urban social policy to the role of women in Black faith. Thirdly, and most importantly, it was the first self-conscious attempt at the creation of a British Black theology.

This development marked an effort to critically reflect upon and wrest meaning and direction from experiences in Britain and link this with broader movements in Christian thinking around emancipation and liberation. However, placed in the context of broader social, economic and cultural shifts which had taken place from the mid-1970s through the late-1980s, our work was rather less the definitive break with the past than we believed. That *A Time to Speak* was captive to the very methods and concerns it sought to criticize can be illustrated in number of ways. For example, a number of the reviewers characterized it as a cry from the heart, a fraternal plea to be included. To be sure, there was no in-depth radical theological, let alone political, analysis contained in the contributions. The focus of the work centered on the state of relations between Black and white Christians and attempts to improve them.

So, at one level it offered a tacit corrective to the marginalization of Black voices and issues in a slowly emerging, larger and more genteel Christian movement for social justice at the time. Such omissions had been neatly encapsulated by the publication of *Faith in the City*, five years earlier, with its articulation of what could be best described as a "theology of moderation." However, despite the fact that this movement had been energized by a recognition of the worst excesses of neo-liberal economics and neo-conservative politics (sold under the brand name of Thatcherism in the United Kingdom and Reaganomics in the United States), *A Time to Speak* had very little to say about the issues affecting Black communities beyond the walls of the Church.

In certain times and conditions such a focus might be both understandable and forgivable. It could be argued that it was a strategic decision to focus on church rather than community issues. This was not the case. We published the best of the work that was made available to use: examinations of broader economic and social trends were simply not being done by Black Christians at the time. Alternatively, one could say that criticism starts where people know best, so clearly the primary focus for Black Christians would be the Church. This argument has its attractions, but becomes a little difficult to sustain given the political and economic policy under Thatcherism and its well-known impact on Black communities. In this context, the failure to criticize and critique such policies is a mortal sin. This, I suggest, was no accident, but instead reflects the highly ambivalent position of the Black Church in British society and its entanglement with the United Kingdom "race relations" industry.

An integral part of the Black church's history in this country has been its willingness to condemn the vices of its own community and the wider society. The emphasis on good works and strong moral codes attracted the attention of the Conservatives in the period of the post-1980s uprisings, as they sought allies in their mission to reclaim the inner cities and to side-step criticisms of their social policies advanced by the established churches. Overtures were made and connections consummated. It should be pointed out that despite this indictment, the Black Church has consistently (and honestly) reported and organized itself to tend to the pain of their communities. However, the theological perspective from which this is done has always shadowed the liberal political integrationist position: pain was presented to those in power in the expectation that they would react rationally (and morally) to alleviate it. That this faith was sustained for any length of time after the mid-1970s, let alone under the post-1979 Conservatives, should imply a need for a more profound reassessment and analysis of the role of the Black Church that is currently expressed by some observers. That some of this work was laid out two years later, in *A Time to Act* does not excuse failures of analysis and practice in the 1980s, nor our failures to listen to the voices of the streets, schools, and workplaces.

Note

[1]Paul Grant and Raj Patel. *A Time to Speak: Perspectives of Black Christians in Britain* (Racial Justice and the Black Theology Working Group, 1990).

Paul Grant is a community and youth worker and currently teaches at the University of Wolverhampton in England. He has been involved in anti-racist work with Christian groups since 1976. He is co-editor of *A Time To Speak: Perspectives of Black Christians in Britain*.

Public Sector and Black Church Partnerships: A New Public Policy Tool

by Marjorie B. Lewis

Since the mid-sixties, local, state and federal policies and their resulting agencies have been involved in an ongoing war on poverty. The goals of this effort have been to eradicate poverty through exogenous motivators, which include "work fare" programs, "head start" programs, and welfare "reform" initiatives.[1] As well-intentioned as these efforts may have been, results have proven less than successful, particularly for inner-city African-American youth. In his paper, "The Rich Get Richer and the Black Poor Get Poorer," Samuel Myers reiterates this assessment, and shows that the plight of the inner-city dweller who is poor, uneducated, and African American has degenerated over the last twenty-five years.[2] The plight of this group, according to Myers, is in part, due to the marginalization of African-American males. This marginalization has resulted in unprecedented gang violence, school dropout rates, imposition of violence to property and persons in African-American inner-city communities, and a high proportion of African-American female-headed households with no, or low incomes below the poverty level.

Recent studies of urban Black churches indicate that they play a vital role in the provision on a wide array of services to members and non-members in their local community.[3] In addition to ministering to the spiritual needs of its members, the Black Church has long responded to the needs of non-members through its varied and extensive community outreach efforts.

> Historically, black churches have been the preeminent institution in the black community for strengthening and stabilizing black families. Since their inception in the eighteenth century, black churches have performed vital spiritual, cultural, social, economic, educational, health, social welfare, community development, economic development and leadership development functions. In addition to forming black educational facilities at the pre-school, elementary, high school and college levels, black religious institutions have been instrumental in creating life insurance companies, banks, other businesses, credit unions, hospitals, nursing homes, funeral homes, orphanages and housing for the elderly and low-income families, and in providing food, clothing and shelter to the needy. Most beneficiaries of such efforts are community residents who are not church members.[4]

By virtue of its historical track record, continuing pervasiveness throughout the Black community, high esteem and access to resources, the Black Church has the potential to play a critical role in expanding and improving social reform. For example, a 1986 Gallup poll conducted for the Joint Center for Political Studies revealed the following:

- African Americans believe, that next to the federal government, the Church has the greatest responsibility to help the poor;
- Seventy-five percent of philanthropic dollars in the African-American community are funneled through the Black Church;
- Most volunteer activities of African Americans center around the Church.[5] A survey of 315 randomly selected churches in the northeastern region of the United States showed that they were important social service institutions targeting families and the community.[6]

Black churches offered programs to meet the community needs which include: 1) the provision of food, clothing and shelter; 2) services for poor families; and 3) youth and elderly programs.

The Black Church historically provided a range of social services to the community on its own initiative. Prior to the development of secular organizations for the provision of social welfare assistance, job counseling, health care and housing, the Black Church was the chief vehicle for community service provision. A more recent study of Black churches in the Northeast concludes that "the contemporary Black church continues to provide social service functions as extensions of its spiritual and religious functions."[7]

The church has also been the mainstay of the African-American family since slavery.

The marginalization of African-American youth is primarily due to economic oppression, but this factor does lead to self-disruptive behavior. It is my belief that the negative and self-destructive behavior can be, and are being countered by the community activities of the Black Church. This institution, in relation to other community-based entities (local schools and community-based organizations), is the most viable vehicle for community-based empowerment, furthermore. There are several reasons for this claim. First, the Church is egalitarian in its acceptance of participants. The Church has also been the mainstay of the African-American family since slavery. Additionally, the Church incorporates all cohorts of the African-American community.[8] Thus, a valuable asset of the African-American Church is that it is a "universal" organization of the African-American community. The African-American Church is already established with a long history of activism, which

provides yet another reason for its capacity to serve as a source of vehicle for community-based empowerment. In the following section, I highlight instances of partnering between the Black Church and some local communities that illustrate the advantages of utilizing the Church to counter negative social behavior engendered by economic oppression.

The Black Church in Action

Denver, Colorado:

Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, Colorado and the Ministerial Alliance of East Denver, Colorado frequently collaborate on issues associated with the African-American community within the city of Denver. Local governmental support is manifested through the mayor and his cabinet's personal participation, particularly in church-based efforts aimed at enhancing self-esteem in youth between the ages of 8 to 12. These programs are provided through four African-American churches (two Baptist, one Methodist, and one Church of God in Christ). All four projects are community-based. Of the 75 participants, an average of 35 percent of the participants were members of the local churches. Measures of the youths' self-esteem levels were significantly changed reflecting more positive attitudes regarding their self-worth and willingness to help others.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:

Former mayor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sophie Masloff, established an office in 1987 to handle religious affairs, the purpose of which was to identify how churches might be useful in curbing a number of youth anti-social issues, particularly, teen pregnancy. From her office came a grant to sponsor a workshop addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy. Teens from the ages of 12 and older were invited to plan this initiative. The planning workshop was financed by the mayor's office and coordinated with the various churches throughout the city. The same indicators were measured before and up to three months after the workshop. The results were as follows: Of the 141 participants, 80 percent were affiliated with a church; of the remaining 20 percent, none of the participants or their families changed their church activity up to three months after the workshop. Again the attitudes of the participants indicated a significant change in relation to self-esteem and perceived control over their environment. Two indicators highly correlated with the propensity to avoid teenage pregnancy.

Oakland, California:

Louis Sullivan, the former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, demonstrated confidence in the Allen Temple Baptist Church of Oakland, California through a grant to be used by that church to serve as a conduit for community-based empowerment. The purpose of the effort is to address anti-social behavior on the part of African-American males.

This is a three-year project which began early Spring 1991. Of the 210 African-American males participating in the community-based program, 38 percent of the youth originally belonged to a church. Of the remaining 62 percent, 15 percent have become active at Allen Temple. Since the program is still in progress, indicators regarding attitudinal changes are incomplete; however, preliminary results show significant changes in the participants attitudes and behavior as measured by self-esteem and efficacy indicators, as well as disruptive behavior in school, and school attendance.

Conclusion

There are concerns expressed regarding the declining penetration of the African-American Church within the community, especially as it relates to the youth. While these issues are important, they do not preclude the fact that church-based, governmentally-supported programs are effective for both congregants and non-congregants. This is illustrated in the three cities with such initiatives. Church and state partnering remains fully untapped as a resource for public policy. The options available to policy makers regarding the plight of the inner-city, however, are quickly diminishing. If there is evidence that churches can help public policy achieve its goals and work with the non-profit sector, particularly in relation to the plight of the inner-city youth, it seems plausible to pursue aggressive efforts to utilize Black churches to a greater extent than has been the case to this point. This brief essay proposes that scholars and activists interested in resolving urban and racial crisis begin to consider the importance, and timeliness of the Black Church as a major policy tool—and partner for non-profit organizations.

Notes

[1]These factors were discussed during the June 20, 1992 Town Meeting West, jointly sponsored by the Graduate School of Public Affairs University of Colorado Denver, KUSA-TV, and the *Rocky Mountain News*.

[2]Samuel Myers. The Rich Get Richer and the Black Poor Get Poorer. Paper presented at meeting, Town Meeting West, 20 June 1992, Denver, Colorado.

[3]See, Andrew Billingsley, *Black Churches and Family-Oriented Community Outreach Programs in the Northeastern United States*. Report of The Ford Foundation and Lilly Endowment Foundation, 1991; and Alicia D. Byrd (Ed.) *Philanthropy and the Black Church* (New York: Council on Foundations, 1990).

[4]Andrew Billingsley, Twelve Gates to the City: Black Churches, Black Families, and the Black Community. In Byrd (Ed.), *Philanthropy and the Black Church*.

[5]Carson D. Emmett, Despite Long History, Black Philanthropy Gets Little Credit as "Self-Help" Tool. In Byrd (Ed.), *Philanthropy and the Black Church*.

[6]Billingsley, Twelve Gates to the City.

[7]Ibid., p. 33

[8]There are relatively low levels of African-American participation in community-based organizations other than churches. As in the case of public education institutions, social organizations are generally geared to a homogeneous cohort in relation to the ages of participants. It is difficult to find specific programs and efforts geared to meet comprehensively the needs of the African-American individual, family or community within a unitary framework.

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Strengthening Black Churches: A Collaborative Approach

by Sylvia R. Johnson

Throughout United States history the Black Church has played a significant role in the Black community. As one of a few truly African-American institutions, the Black Church, led by skilled, committed pastors and lay leaders, has served as an anchor for the survival and achievement of the African-American community. Black churches bring to their social ministries and neighborhood revitalization efforts a wealth of strengths and assets including a set of values, a self-help philosophy, an emphasis on leadership development, and human resources which are all brought to bear on the myriad of social, economic and moral issues confronting Black people. In the early 1990s, Boston-area foundations began supporting the work of several Black churches in the community. After initial data gathering and reflection, foundations concluded that Black churches have a unique and critical role to play in building and sustaining the Black community and that foundations can further their own goals by forming new partnerships with Black churches.

One such partnership is the Black Church Capacity Building Program (BCCBP). Established in 1995 by the Hyams Foundation, the BCCBP is a collaboration of funders and churches that provides technical assistance, training and other resources to African-American churches and faith-based ministries that are developing and implementing human service and community revitalization programs in African-American neighborhoods of Boston, Cambridge, and Lynn, Massachusetts. It was developed through a six-month strategic planning process involving Black clergy, grantmakers, community leaders, and professional consultants who came together to identify and design the BCCBP program components.

BCCBP's primary goal is to strengthen the capacity of African-American churches and faith-based ministries to develop, run and manage high quality programs and projects focused on such areas as economic development, youth development, community organizing and advocacy and the development of space for community programs. BCCBP is guided by the conviction that this partnership will strengthen both parties and help each to achieve its mission more effectively. Current funders include The Boston Foundation, Boston Globe Foundation, Clipper Ship Foundation, Hyams Foundation, and Lotus Development Corporation. Twenty-five applications were received for BCCBP's first round of technical assistance grants and seven Black churches have been approved for the first cycle of funding. These churches are Born Again Evangelistic Outreach Ministries, Christ Temple Church of Personal Experience, Emmanuel Temple Church, Faith Pentecostal Church, Mount Calvary Holy Church, Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Zion Baptist Church. Five of the seven churches are Pentecostal churches.

Church grantees sponsor a wide variety of social ministries including youth leadership development, social service programs, economic development, short-term and permanent residential programs, child care, private schools and church-based community organizing. Each of these churches will be assisted by one or more technical assistance providers specializing in those areas. The churches and technical assistance providers were selected by a 12-member steering committee of church representatives and funders.

BCCBP is premised on the belief that Black churches and faith-based ministries have a unique and critical role to play in building and sustaining the Black community. In a recent article, Lynn Huntley, the former director of Ford Foundation's Rights and Social Justice Program, highlights the strengths this Foundation finds in Black churches.[1] They include a track record of achievements and credibility; good access and true penetration of the community; cost-effective, results-oriented programs; and a long history of community service, civil rights and public policy advocacy. Huntley further reminds us that these institutions receive most of the charitable contributions made by African Americans and are really indigenous expressions of the community's philanthropic traditions.

While acknowledging that the Black Church plays a central role in the community, the BCCBP strategic planning members also observed that the Black community has changed, becoming more diverse and geographically dispersed. This has created a new set of challenges. The Black Church no longer exists as the sole point of focus for Black neighborhoods. Given this reality, the Church must find ways to tap more fully into the broad array of talent that exists within the Church and community and to build partnerships with external resources. Technical assistance that builds on the strengths of the Black Church will help churches and faith-based ministries deal with new challenges and be more effective in addressing community priorities. The BCCBP project seeks to build the skills and leadership of pastors, lead organizational and program staff, and lay members.

Technical assistance provided through BCCBP includes a variety of professional services in areas such as program/social ministry assessment, strategic planning, community organizing, business and economic development, financial management, leadership development, facility development and computers and technology. BCCBP focuses on African-American neighborhoods and gives preference to churches or faith-based ministries that are located and carry out their ministry in low-income neighborhoods; have substantial support for technical assistance among church leadership;

have made a financial and human resource commitment to the technical assistance project; and have a track record of community involvement.

The technical assistance will strengthen the skills and knowledge needed to create or develop existing social ministries and programs. It will not, however, carry out social ministry/program development and management tasks on behalf of a church. BCCBP grantees will come together periodically for group training and information sharing. Also, churches and faith-based ministries not chosen for the first funding cycle are invited to participate in group trainings on financial management, computer technology, grantsmanship and leadership development.

Many church leaders have little knowledge of, or experience with, organized philanthropy...

Challenges to Working with Black Churches

In many ways, philanthropic institutions and Black churches have common agendas. Numerous social ministries sponsored by Black churches are addressing community needs which fall within the parameters of grantmaking guidelines for local funders. While grantmaking institutions and Black churches have many common goals, they operate very differently. It is important to make certain that there is a common understanding of terms (i.e. program, ministry, capacity building, stewardship, accountability, etc.) and that both sets of institutions understand the different decision-making and approval processes in place. Many church leaders have little knowledge of, or experience with, organized philanthropy and many funders know very little about Black churches; therefore, it is important to share information about grantmaking and the history and structure of Black churches. It is equally important to provide clarity regarding expectations and roles on both sides.

Partnerships between organized philanthropy and Black churches are developing in cities and towns across the country. As these relationships grow, the following questions need to be continuously addressed by funders: Are these partnerships structured in the form of "special initiatives" or are they a part of regular grantmaking activities? How do funders initiate communication with Black churches? Do funders structure communication and outreach differently for Black church partnerships? Are there different strategies for working successfully with large versus small churches, individual churches versus church-based collaboratives, technical assistance versus program grants? Do partnerships have funds for staffing? How are Black church leaders involved in the creation and development of these partnerships?

At the same time, funder/Black church partnerships should prompt us to seek answers to additional questions related to impact: Are social ministry programs sponsored by Black churches becoming more effective? Are existing ones expanding and new ones being created? Are funders changing their grantmaking policies or approaches because of Black church partnerships? Are attitudes or preconceived ideas about Black churches and funders changing? Are churches receiving new financial and in-kind support to implement social ministry programs? Are churches learning how to access resources?

Too little information is known (by funders and the larger society) about existing social ministry programs offered by Black churches. While several well-known books have been published, it is important to know more about the kinds of programs offered. Do these programs operate regularly, or on an "as needed" basis? What civil rights, advocacy, or public policy activities occur? What percentage of programs are offered in collaboration with other churches, community resources or public/private organizations? Who staffs these services or activities?

Conclusion

Each of the questions above need to be answered and addressed if Black churches and philanthropic organizations are to develop partnerships which assist the Black community. Exploring the answers to these questions will serve to enlighten and enrich the experiences of both parties.

Funders and Black churches are excited about their emerging relationship. While some funders may have approached this initiative in a typical "grantor-grantee" model, most funders have come to realize that there is mutual benefit in developing partnerships with Black churches. Involving Black clergy and lay leaders in the planning, implementation, and staffing of this project has enhanced grantmaking to the community. The interactive nature of this partnership has taken funders to a new level of understanding "community assets," and we hope to draw from this experience to make our grantmaking more empowering and meaningful in future years.

Note

[1]Lynn Huntley, "Why We Fund Church-Based Programs," *Ford Foundation News & Commentary* (May/June 1995).

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Building on a Radical Foundation: The Work of Theologian Howard Thurman Continues

by Stephanie Athey

Howard Thurman (1900–1981), whose life spanned most of this century, was a prodigious intellect and a pioneering theologian; his persistent effort, especially over the period of 1930s–1960s, to grapple with racism and classism within American Christianity paved the way for intellectual, political and religious leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Through his contact with Mahatma Gandhi, Thurman became convinced that African Americans might bring the "unadulterated message of non-violence to all people everywhere."[1] Determined to find a moral and practical method to unite the concerns of the human spirit and the immediate material and social needs of disenfranchised people, Thurman moved against the advice of his own mentors and the racial proscriptions and patriotic zeal of Cold War Christianity. His study of Native American and Eastern spiritualities, his growing international frame of reference, his exploration of mysticism and suspicion of formal creeds as divisive, all distinguished him within an American and a Black tradition of religious practice.

As a preacher and an educator, Thurman's teaching in San Francisco's innovative Fellowship Church of All Peoples, and at Oberlin College, Morehouse College, Howard University, and Boston University challenged the assumptions of white institutions and reached beyond national and doctrinal boundaries to insist on the power of religious experience to create human community among diverse groups, religions and cultures. This is a rich and weighty legacy, one which his home community of Daytona Beach, Florida, means to test and extend as it opens a new venture in inter-faith, inter-cultural education and community relations.

The Howard Thurman Program in Daytona Beach creates a partnership between Stetson University, an elite and historically white liberal arts college in nearby DeLand, and a Miami-based non-profit organization, New Birth, Inc. With the assistance of historically Black college Bethune-Cookman of Daytona Beach, the program seeks to integrate scholars with religious and civic leaders to seek solutions to social, religious, racial and ethnic problems. The program was inaugurated in Spring 1996 under the leadership of the Reverend Jefferson P. Rogers, a student of Howard Thurman and himself deeply involved in the Civil Rights struggle. Rogers was an early member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and president of that organization's Washington D.C. chapter for seven years. Rogers describes the program as a watershed effort to make the academic work of the university relevant to the social action needs of communities—an exciting and formidable goal.

The promise and challenge of meaningful cooperation between Black and white private institutions in this region and at the end of this decade are equally large. It is with those challenges in mind that one must explore Thurman's work and test its relevance for the 1990s. Thurman's own experience has much to teach about the limits and possibilities of institutional collaboration and transformation. The Howard Thurman Program is based at the Daytona Beach home where Thurman was born. His grandmother's appeal to local authorities enabled Thurman to be the first African-American child to take the eighth grade examination, which induced the Negro public school to extend its curriculum through that grade. In Daytona, young Thurman absorbed the determination and example of Thurman family friend, educator Mary McLeod Bethune who founded her school for young women just a short distance from his home. His own education led him north to Morehouse and then to Rochester Theological Seminary in New York. Graduating from that institution in 1926, he was ordained a Baptist minister, and after teaching at Oberlin and Morehouse, went on to serve as a faculty member and eventually Dean of Chapel at Howard University. In 1935 he was invited to lead the first African American and Christian delegation to India and to meet with Gandhi in the midst of India's anti-colonial struggle.

Thurman's independent study prior to his travel in India, Burma, and Ceylon was marked by prolonged, serious engagement with mysticism. His consideration of the inner life and the interrelatedness of all life led him to an understanding of the individual's contact with God as a call, not to retreat from the world, but to total involvement in all its details. Religious experience brought one into a full mutual responsibility for guarding and affirming life and for ensuring the survival and sustenance of human community. He experimented with forms of worship that enabled meditation and nourishment of the inner life, creating—in his belief—a space in which people meet unbound by particularities of creed, gender, race, class, politics or nation. Though encouraged by the success of these experiments, Thurman continued to seek the mechanism by which spiritual unity and transcendence might activate social transformation and might alter the historical and institutional structures which resisted unity and suppressed life in his own society.

Thurman describes the travel abroad and his contact with Gandhi as life changing. His experience in India sharpened the paradox he already keenly felt as an African-American ambassador of Christianity come to address those oppressed by British colonialism. He came to share knowledge of African Americans, yet he did so standing as a representative of a religion which had efficiently carried out the work of imperialism and sustained its effects in his own country. He was

interrogated sharply on this score throughout India. If Christianity were powerless before the color bar, then what could he possibly have to share with the peoples of India that had any meaning? Thurman felt the conflict acutely, as he expressed it, "What is the anatomy of the process by which the powerful and powerless draw their support and inspiration from the same God and their teachings from the same source?"[2] Gandhi's questions probed the same point: given the present condition of African Americans, the function of churches, the historic relationship between American slavery and Christianity—how had African Americans survived? why had enslaved Americans not turned to the inclusiveness of Islam?[3]

Thurman returned to Howard, eventually to resign his tenured position and prestigious post as Dean of Chapel. In 1944, determined to follow his conviction that Christianity could be a vehicle for social change, he left for San Francisco to co-found and pastor the innovative Fellowship Church of All Peoples. There he joined a small but committed group of white, Black and Asian American parishioners in an experiment which forthrightly challenged American racial segregation. Putting Thurman's own teaching to a test in post-war California, in the wake of Japanese internment, the church had a steady, if indirect, impact on the climate of race relations in the area. It grew from the original core of fifty to some 200 resident members and, interestingly, approximately 1000-at-large members. Those in the latter group, like many other political figures and celebrities, sought out Thurman as guide and counsel; some of these included Josephine Baker, Eleanor Roosevelt, Alan Paton, Whitney Young, Vernon Jordan, and Jesse Jackson. The list speaks to Thurman's impact on his contemporaries and the generation to come; it speaks as well to his growing prominence.

By 1953, Thurman's extensive writings, his preaching and successful attempts to build an interracial community of fellowship caught the attention of the white media. *Life* magazine in that year named Thurman the only African American among "twelve of the country's most eminent preachers."[4] That same year Thurman accepted an invitation to assume the position of Dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University, where his innovations in worship and his writing on spiritual and social action continued. Knowing that a university setting offered greater potential for outreach and dissemination, he also came promising an "eye-level encounter" with a Black man would be an experience unsettling to that institution.[5] In the end this was precisely the case. After ten years, by Thurman's own account, the life of Marsh Chapel had grown into a nonsectarian, intercultural experience that challenged the structure and control of the university. It revealed what Thurman called the "intrinsic contradiction" and ultimately problematic nature of religious freedom within an institutional arrangement.[6] This problem was deepened by Thurman's own theological and social commitments. As the Dean of the School of Theology put it at the time, "The mystic is seldom an organization man. Those who avoid the securities of...doctrine or sacrament or institution—and insist on speaking in public—give uneasy hours to the ecclesiastical bureaucrat."[7]

Thurman devised a religious practice of unity in the era of legal racial segregation.

Many components of Thurman's legacy are apt for the current work in Florida's Daytona Beach. As a former student of Thurman and Director of the program, Reverend Rogers draws on Thurman's emphasis on authentic education relevant to the political and social climate of the day, the role of the Black Church as a social instrument, and the capacity of religious experience to forge unity in action across barriers of race, class, religion, and region. Yet the challenges which face such an enterprise in the 1990s are far different than those which Thurman confronted. Thurman devised a religious practice of unity in the era of legal racial segregation. His work rose on the optimistic cusp of the Civil Rights Movement—before long sought after civil rights legislation came up short and Black Power rethought the possibility of racial cooperation in the work of anti-racist, anti-colonial struggle for Black empowerment. The contemporary effort in Thurman's name returns to the counties of Central Florida in an era of racial retrenchment and pessimism. This is an area in which, just this past year, Supreme Court findings on racial apportionment in legislative districts have remapped voting districts; John Singleton's on-site filming of the historical Rosewood massacre has stirred local discomfort and Klan grumbling; the county sheriff has been reelected (narrowly and with lengthy contestation) in spite of a controversial policy targeting Black and Latino motorists for impromptu drug inspection; and just two hours away in St. Petersburg, riots over police violence caught national attention this fall. Jefferson Rogers, Stetson University and Bethune-Cookman College take up this work in a region that is culturally rich—with a longstanding African-American community, a strong resident Mexican presence and rapidly growing Puerto Rican population.

While federal laws have attempted to force some measure of cooperation between state sponsored white and Black educational institutions over the last thirty years, this has not been the case with private colleges. Few models for deeply cooperative relationships exist. In a 1995 exchange between administrators and faculty of Millsaps and Tougaloo in Jackson, Mississippi, the group publicly assessed its history in this regard.[8] Moments of collaboration were student inspired (in the late 1960s) and not nurtured or sustained institutionally. Institutional structures must be adapted and the commitment—political and financial—to do so must come from the upper levels of the universities' administration. Stetson and Bethune-Cookman haven't even this checkered past to show. And the institutional commitment which will nourish and sustain collaboration, though given an enormous boost by

the program funding from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, is still in developmental stages.

The key to this cooperative venture in university and community relations will be, clearly, a deep reeducation of the educators themselves. In a prologue to this work, Rogers evocatively called for a "cultural renaissance" within the Black community of the Daytona Beach area and announced the need for what, of necessity, must amount to an educational renaissance as well, the "creation of a pedagogy that is not irrelevant to community needs."[9] Stetson is a private college in a conservative and white Southern Baptist tradition, yet one struggling to grapple with the meaning of that heritage as it seeks to redefine its mission multiculturally. The extent to which an agenda of religious and racial freedom can transform the routines and structures of an institution is a lesson Howard Thurman's life can teach, and a lesson that proves quite difficult to learn. It suggests the teachers themselves must be taught. Goodwill can coexist with the ill-effects of what Rogers terms "contemporary euphemistic pedagogy, and politically prudent praxis."[10] Neither necessarily alters an institution's reluctance to address "chronic facts" concerning the survival needs of people in the immediate vicinity.

This philosophy promises to invert in vigorous fashion the elite and traditionally Western model of education which has structured our national norms and the paternalist model of philanthropy which exists as deeply rooted Southern tradition. Only the community can save the university, not the other way around as universities have grown comfortable believing.

"The university often indicts itself" says Rogers. "My concern is the academic weakness of institutions whose sense of their own functional superiority is grounded on an academic ableness that in fact they lack. There is a pride in ostensible authority which is simply lacking. If the academy becomes responsible you create an institution which is both radical and revolutionary. 'Radical' means 'right.' You don't build a house on anything other than a radical foundation."[11]

Thurman's theology and practice were certainly radical in this sense, providing strong foundations for those in the Black Church, like King, who went on to make the Church a point of mobilization. Thurman himself had difficulty adapting his theology of unity in worship to a systematic dismantling of institutional structures and a widespread program of social change. For Thurman, the Church was a resource for activists, a point of nourishment and meditation not of agitation. The test for any program now in Central Florida will be how well it harnesses these twin impulses of Black church tradition, the educational and transformational, and extends those in a socially progressive manner to suit the needs of the place and climate.

New Birth Incorporated and Stetson University

The idea for Stetson University's partnership with New Birth grew out of two years of talks between Rogers and Stetson Institute for Christian Ethics Director, Dixon Sutherland. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund has extended Stetson a two-year grant contingent on Stetson's commitment to match that amount in the following two years. The Thurman Program will focus on three fronts. First, community programming will extend from the Daytona Beach Thurman House and the Cultural Park now being negotiated with the City of Daytona Beach for development on the Thurman property and adjacent land. A key venture will be the Rites of Passage Project, an educational and social opportunity for youth modeled on Darryl Kennon's successful program of that name in Baltimore, Maryland. On a second front, the Thurman Program will help to establish the Thurman-Ashe Preparatory School, an academy focusing on providing excellence in education to area youth. The third element of the Thurman Program is designed to convene scholars and community leaders locally and nationally for the earnest and ongoing work of interracial and interfaith dialogue. Stetson will serve as an academic and educational base and partner with which the Program will host a variety of lecture series, student internships, ecumenical conferences and cultural events. Noted participants in the series' first year will include religious leaders Samuel DeWitt Proctor, as well as writers and activists Derrick Bell and Kwame Turé—all nationally-known authorities on African-American Studies.

Planned in the near future are an ecumenical conference in Thurman's honor, focusing on the spiritual roots of social change; an African-American inter-faith conference to address biases and misunderstandings between Blacks, Jews and Muslims; a Black women's conference for leaders; two education conferences for pastors from churches with black and white congregation, focusing on ways to reverse racism and exploring on the role of the African-American church in reshaping the social agenda of the community; and a concert series featuring Black artists. But in explaining his plans for such high profile visitors and events, Jefferson Rogers quickly notes that the goal is not show but substance and action—the preparation of a radical foundation in "authentic teaching." "The Thurman Program academically can become one of such quality that it would, in my very private and biased opinion, supersede the DuBois Center at Harvard University. We must build, not on sensationalism, but on a substantial institutional approach to social and spiritual truth."[12] And in laying the foundation for this type of authentic, intercultural education, Rogers believes the Black Church must play a leading role: "The Black church is a very conservative institution, intellectually conservative and culturally rich. What Martin Luther King, Jr. was able to do was to trigger cultural therapy through the Black church. The Civil Rights Movement educated the community in a way it had not been before. It is the best instrument that African Americans have—renewal must come through the Black church."[13]

Notes

[1]Thurman describes this encounter in *With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1979), 132.

[2]Ibid., 116.

[3]Ibid., 132. Thurman describes this encounter in pages 130-136.

[4]"Twelve Great American Preachers," *Life* vol. 34, no. 14 (April 6, 1953), 126.

[5]Thurman, 169.

[6]Ibid., 181.

[7]Walter Meulder, cited in Walter E. Fluker, *They Looked for a City: A Comparative Analysis of the Ideal of Community in the Thought of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 19.

[8]*Southern Humanities Conference*, Jackson, Mississippi (February 16-18, 1995).

[9]Jefferson Rogers, "Prologue to the Howard Thurman Program." Presented to Stetson University's Committee on Diversity, October 23, 1996.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Personal Interview with Reverend Jefferson Rogers, (October 1996).

[13]Ibid.

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The Sacred as the Basis for Human Creativity and Agency in the Black Church[1]

by Cheryl Townsend Gilkes

Religion is, I believe, the most important site for human creativity, innovation, and agency. In the world of the sacred in any social context, one is able to find the widest variety of human constructions of meaning. Indeed, the true understanding of human diversity may be found in the study of religion and the processes through which people sustain and renew their religious organizations and their religious world views. It is important, I think, to apply these new insights to the study of the African-American religious experience. The Black church,[2] or the collective experience of African-American Christians in the United States, is important for a number of reasons but most especially because it had been the basis for an ethnic identity and the context for mobilization for social change.

The discussion in this essay attempts to integrate several lines of inquiry related to this observation. It is based on a research project focused on the Sanctified Church. Initially fueled by an interest in the emergence of new African-American religious congregations and denominations at a critical juncture in America's racial-ethnic historical outline—in other words a problem focused on social change and community reorganization at the end of Reconstruction and during the rise of Jim Crow, that interest broadened into an examination of the way in which religion fostered cultural identity and community, especially among African Americans. The research occurred at a moment of unprecedented interaction among African Americans from diverse strands of the African-American religious experience as the "golden cohort" benefitting from the open doors created by the Civil Rights Movement entered colleges, changed churches, and provided the nucleus for the growth of African-American mega-churches and the rise of what Lincoln and Mamiya have called "Neo-Pentecostalism."[3] Observations of key congregations and national meetings of the Sanctified Church underscored the dynamics of continuity across denominational boundaries in spite of the still-salient histories of conflict with Baptist and Methodist churches.

The activities that fostered continuity generated an interest in other national and regional religious meetings where African-American church organizations and selected other groups utilized religious ritual as an essential component of their "conventions" or national meetings.[4] The relationship between convention and community became one of several lines of inquiry that grew out of my study of the Sanctified church that sought to understand the historical processes through which an African-American religious imagination (world-view, ethos) was constituted and sustained. The insights from these formal observations have been augmented by my "insider" activities as an African-American clergywoman attached to a congregation and active with several national organizations.

The event that forms the core perspective and inspiration for this paper actually comes from one of my insider activities as parliamentarian for a small regional Baptist convention in New England. The distinctive problems and constraints faced by the actors in the site renders the taken-for-granted aspects of religious life in the African-American experience highly problematic. The dislocations and discontinuities offer opportunities for discourses and activities surrounding the role and meaning of tradition that highlight the importance of what Emirbayer calls "the dynamic moment of human agency."[5] While this paper will focus on the framing, constituting, and production of the sacred in the diverse contexts of African-American church and community organizations, it will also explore the ways in which these activities connect actors to the larger project of constituting and sustaining a national community and generating an oppositional/critical/counter hegemonic consciousness/conscience as they address the problems of surviving in a hostile society and of engendering and fostering change in that society. Indeed it may be that for oppressed racial-ethnic groups like African Americans in the United States, groups whose identities, personhood, and humanity are contested and negated through social, cultural, economic, and political challenges, ritual space becomes the most important site for considering the moral dimension of social life.

...I began to see the framing of the Sacred as a core activity for asserting humanity...

On a particular evening at a particular Baptist convention I began to see the framing of the Sacred as a core activity for asserting humanity (or maintaining the perpetual uplift of our moral being) that is reflected in a wide range of settings from the ritual behavior of street gangs in the underclass, the Million Man March, and the growth of the mega-churches among new and newly configured Black middle classes. Indeed, it may be that this framing of the Sacred may be, for the oppressed, the essential foundation for the production of their humanity.

I Want to Know Where I Am!

The setting is a New England hotel about ninety

This essay is based on a paper prepared for presentation at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, "I Want to Know Where I Am: Framing the Sacred in African-American Life and Culture" Nashville, Tennessee (November 9, 1996).

minutes from Boston. It is a resort hotel with all sorts of amenities. The Baptist convention booked barely enough rooms to have access to the large meeting room. Until the last five years, this regional convention had met in churches. Since the annual meeting took place in July, the heat in some of the host churches would become unbearable and with increasing frequency, participants in the meeting would collapse from the heat or from other medical conditions aggravated by the heat. Unlike southern congregations, it is not economically feasible for New England churches to acquire air conditioning. A few new churches have built it in, but restricting meetings to churches with air conditioning would restrict the ability of the convention to be inclusive of its entire constituency. The coldness and the diffuseness of the hotel meeting room are apparent and utterly daunting. This is the evening that the convention's Board of Evangelism has chosen to invite a member pastor to deliver a sermon. The preacher of that evening, wearing the white suit of African-American Baptist tradition, stands at the back, pausing to survey the room. When the members of the Board and other officers are ready, they all come forward together and take their seats.

A service with singing and prayer begins and then the preacher of the evening is invited to deliver his sermon. As he approached the podium that is now supposed to be his pulpit, he tossed his handkerchief over the microphone and said, "I want to know where I am." Then he "raised" the hymn, "A Charge to Keep." First he lined out the opening line, "A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify." Immediately the people present followed with the slow pantatonic response that is affectionately called the "common meter" or "Dr. Watts" style of singing.[6] Younger musicians unfamiliar with this style had to be restrained as they attempted to find the tune on the piano or electronic keyboards. Young people who had not learned to sing in this style looked around in shock as some of the most sedate of their Sunday School teachers and pastors closed their eyes, began to sing what seemed to be a most mournful sound, and in some cases began to weep and to shout.

By the time the evening preacher began to "line out" the second half of the stanza, "A never dying soul to save and fit it for the sky," the assembled group had become a congregation. They had found a shared cadence and various individuals had begun to rock and sway to foster and establish that cadence. Unlike other forms of music where musicians and choirs established the rhythms and the beat, common meter hymns depend upon the congregation's reaching a shared definition of the situation during the hymn. Pitch and meter are negotiated between song leader and congregation and the hierarchy of diverse voices varies as the key arrived at and pitch of the leader may vary. Like spirituals, the common meter hymns are the songs of the hush harbors when, during slavery, the congregation was required first to establish the situation and then live it. The processes by which the situation was defined or framed in these circumstances always took place in situations where simply stealing away to be religious and to frame sacred space was an act of oppositional consciousness/conscience. To frame such a setting through the negotiated order of voices of a diverse congregation was to frame a community and to reconstitute its consciousness. In those brief moments at a Baptist convention in New England, a connection with tradition was rekindled and a specific community of sacred memory was framed.

For a number of young people in the room, the moment paralleled a similar moment described by W.E.B. Du Bois in his ground breaking essay, "Faith of the Fathers."[7] Du Bois as a young New Englander, was sent to the South to study at Fisk University. As was true for other Black colleges, Fisk students were sent into the countryside to teach in rural communities during the summer. Du Bois, during one of these summer teaching jobs, witnessed his first revival. His reflections on that first encounter with the core elements ("elementary forms") of African-American religious tradition led him to write an essay identifying those elements, the preacher, the music, and the frenzy, at least ten years prior to Durkheim's publication of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.[8]

As with much of Du Bois's work, the continuing contemporary relevance of his observations require some translation.[9] Du Bois accurately identified the role of the preacher as critical for understanding the importance of indigenous, flexible, creative, and multi-talented leadership and the primacy of spiritual leadership. Although we now know that indigenous leaders whose authority is charismatic and spiritually grounded are not limited to the preachers, most other leaders in the African-American community have strong groundings in the church. Du Bois identified the music as the second important dimension. Here he was more concerned with identifying the genius and the source of influence that African Americans exerted over the culture at large and the roots of that contribution in both their African heritage and American experience. Without saying so, Du Bois hints that the music illustrates the processes of adaptation and change that have emerged from cultural choices that slaves made under the stress of experience, an emergent and nascent theory of cultural agency. Thirdly, Du Bois saw "the frenzy" or, more accurately "Shouting" as a fundamental of this distinctive experience. It was here that the shared interaction that governed the setting of the church at once illuminated and constituted the cultural whole.

If Du Bois's essay may be viewed as a preliminary identification of the "elementals" or "basics" of the African-American religious experience, then he was identifying the very processes by which African Americans construct and invoke the sacred moment. When the evangelistic preacher of the evening declared, "I want to know where I am," he initiated a process of religious agency that enabled the assembled people to become a particular kind of social world, to define a situation in terms that allowed people to connect their lives and the sacred moment to a history whose threads were interwoven with sacred definitions.

The imprimatur of the collective definition of the Sacred also constitutes an assertion of humanity and collective identity that continues to reframe the nation in a variety of situations. The behavior of the congregation when compared to the behavior in other settings where African Americans invoke and construct the Sacred invites an analysis of the larger variety of settings where African Americans use components of the Sacred to define and to manage other affairs. This incident also invites us to uncover the importance of convocations and conventions in the national life of African Americans.

In the case of the Baptist convention, the insistence, "I want to know where I am," led to a ritual of definition, affirmation, and inclusion. Undergirding the possibility of all of this was something more basic to the African-American religious experience: what we may wish to call rituals of collusion. The situation was defined by the response of others; it was defined by the affirmation of others that they shared a reality. Furthermore, people by raising their voices made an investment or a promise to uphold the situation. Erving Goffman offered a complex theory of "basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject."[10] An important element of the process by which definitions of situations are defined and sustained is what he calls "collusion." Collusion occurs, according to Goffman, "when three or more persons sustain a state of talk" and when "a certain amount of 'registering' occurs: while one character performs a deed, another tends to register visibly his response to it."

It was the registered visible response that alerted this preacher to the fact that in spite of the trappings of the affluent, upper-middle class that characterized the convention hotel, there were enough people there to constitute a traditional African-American congregation where certain shared understandings could be discussed and affirmed. His very traditional sermon that followed, included an important auto-ethnography of his life growing up in the Mississippi Delta and the meanings and practices associated with being religious. The ritual of collusion made possible a ritual of community memory, another basic form of religious experience. Before there was Goffman's theory of framing, there was an African-American religious experience that generated the truism, "where two or three touch and agree...." Besides its denominational bodies, the Black church also consists of a wide variety of organizations that also meet nationally and whose activities involve a variety of sacred frameworks. The utilization of these frameworks was part of the genius of the Million Man March that was largely lost on the press and the white public. It was difficult for most white Americans to separate Farrakhan from the March and yet the March, although ostensibly organized by the Nation of Islam, reached out to and allowed for a variety of African-American constituencies to contribute to a complex ritual of multiple layered framing. Without an insider's understanding of these frames and the constituencies associated with them, much of what was said and done, including large portions of Farrakhan's speech, were simply lost.

Framing the Sacred, Framing the Nation

For African Americans, the history of their religious experience and other cultural forms has involved a constant struggle with a dominant definition of the situation at variance and sometimes hostile to their own. As our research on African-American history seeks to understand better the complexities of life in a pluralistic and oppressive society, particularly the cultural industry of enslaved people and its consequences for later community life, we come to understand better the ways in which people circumscribed by ideologies of diminished or non-existent humanity (racism) insisted upon asserting their humanity. Religion was one of these critical sites.

Historical and sociological analyses of the Black church have pointed to the Church as the "center" of social life and a "nation within a nation." Lincoln and Mamiya have identified a set of dialectically related polarities within which African Americans shape the religious dimension of their experience.[11] More attention to the production of the Sacred, the framing of the Sacred, in African-American life and culture will motivate us to appreciate better the complex levels of human agency required to negotiate these polarities across the diversities within the African-American community. At the same time we can better uncover the ways in which collusive framings help to constitute and sustain a national consciousness, an ethnic reality. It is possible that the production of the Sacred, the framing of the Sacred is the most vital way in which the community/nation itself is framed and maintained. The act of defining "where I am" may be an elementary form of religious conduct that holds the key to a form of human agency that forms and informs community boundaries for a wide variety of groups in pluralistic societies. The study of framing the Sacred or producing the Sacred may provide a new and revitalized approach to a sociology of the religions of the oppressed.

Notes

[1]In loving and respectful memory of Reverend George O'Neill.

[2]When I use the term, "the Black church," I am using it the way Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya used the term to talk about the churches and experiences of African-American Christians in the United States. The term in no way implies one large over-arching ecstatic involving just Black people. See Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 1990).

[3]I disagree with Lincoln and Mamiya's formulation. What they refer to as "Neo-Pentecostalism" is a rearticulation of African-American ecstatic religious traditions. One of the features of churches such as the Church of God in Christ is their histories of defending the core and distinctive traditions of African-American religious practice. Not only is the Church of God in Christ the first Black Pentecostal denomination, but it is the first Pentecostal denomination. In existence before the Azusa Street Revival, the Church of God in Christ emerged as a Holiness denomination from a late nineteenth century controversy among Black Mississippi Baptists and involved a stated resistance to the encroaching formalism in Black churches. This church, as part of a larger community of churches that African Americans call collectively the Sanctified Church, has been in a culturally symbiotic relationship to the rest of the Black church since its existence. The resurgence and rearticulation of tradition that Lincoln and Mamiya call neo-pentecostalism was simply a more dramatic version of a process that had been endemic to the Black church since Emancipation.

[4]The importance of national meetings or conventions has been discussed in detail by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in her study of the women's convention

within the National Baptist Convention. Building upon the work of E. Franklin Frazier, she points out the importance of the national meeting or convention in constituting the nation within a nation that the Black church often is. See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 -1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[5]Mustafa Emirbayer. "Useful Durkheim," *Sociological Theory 14* (July 2, 1996), p. 111.

[6]The term "common meter" is used popularly by African Americans to refer to a style of singing involving the lining out of hymns and the congregation's response, usually in a very slow and majestically cadenced style.

[7]W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications Inc., [1903, 1953, 1961]), pp. 140-51.

[8]Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [A New Translation by Karen E. Fields] (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

[9]Unfortunately, many readings of Du Bois's work fail to translate his nineteenth century English with all of its King James influence. We often forget that the Bible was required reading for students and that when Du Bois uses words like "awful" it is often the equivalent of today's usage of "awesome." This is a problem for the critiques that are currently being developed of Du Bois's work.

[10]Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974).

[11]In moving beyond the simplicities of other explanatory models (the assimilation model, the isolation model, the compensatory model, the ethnic-community prophetic model), Lincoln and Mamiya offer the following dialectical tensions as a key to understanding the Black church in a more holistic perspective: the priestly and prophetic functions; other worldly versus this worldly orientations; universalism and particularism in approaches to racial history; the communal and the privatistic in institutional practices; the charismatic versus the bureaucratic in organizational forms; and the dialectic between resistance and accommodation. See Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience.*

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A Review Essay

by Donald Cunnigen

The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith by Samuel DeWitt Proctor, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996, 243 pp., $22.95. ISBN 0-399-14089-1.

During a 1960's dinner of the prestigious Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (also known as the Boule), an exclusive organization founded at the turn of the century by some of the African American community's professional luminaries, an ideological confrontation took place between the Boule, and National Association of Black Educators (NABE) members. Among the distinguished Boule diners was Samuel DeWitt Proctor, who became pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Professor at Rutgers University. The confrontation focused on their different views regarding the role of African-Americans in American society. According to Proctor, "[the NABE] thought the fraternity brothers had bought into dominant culture too deeply, had sacrificed their African identify, and had moved too far—too high—from grassroots blacks."[1] On the other hand, Proctor said their (Boule) view of "[African-Americans]" destiny was to engage in creating a new culture of their own, a blending of African residuals, survival strategies learned in slavery, and consciousness of their dual personalities—U.S. citizens tacitly aware that they were participating in a unique transition that would lead America to become something entirely new.... They regarded the [NABE] as cop-outs who had recognized how, long and how hard the real struggle would be and chose something quicker and closer.[2]

While the confrontation above represented a very small part of Proctor's life, it was at the heart of his memoir. Throughout the memoir, he discusses the African-American community's spiritual resilience over adversity, particularly racial discrimination and hatred from American whites. He suggested the resilience was derived from a spiritual center created from the African-American religious tradition. Using the New Testament verse from Hebrew (11:1), "now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," he examined his life experiences in relationship with "the larger history of the black struggle for equality" and his faith in an intangible hope for a better future. The verse served as a syllogism which explained inexplicable phenomena throughout his life. Moreover, he viewed it as a universal truth by which many African-Americans lived their lives.

We Are All God's Children—The African-American Religious Tradition

According to Proctor, the religious world view of many white southern theologians suggested a submissive role for African-Americans based on their reading of the scripture. He believed the African-American religious tradition did not accept the "self-negating religion offered by the slave masters."[3] Proctor said African-American clergy and believers followed the ideas of African-American ministers, such as, Colored Methodist Episcopal Church founder, Lucius Holsey; Holsey stated every person was the same under God. It was this common belief which sustained African-Americans through the hardships of life. In Proctor's opinion, the church became a refuge where people gathered to "look up." Proctor said churches combined "religious instruction with education in citizenship and cultural history."[4]

While Proctor's view of African-American religion offered many positive descriptions, he acknowledged the fact that the African-American ministry has had its share of charlatans who have exploited the communities religious zeal and offered uncharitable biblical interpretations. Without naming the minister, he cited the example of an anonymous Cape Verdean charismatic minister who wore outlandish garments, drove an expensive automobile, grew long fingernails, and extracted large sums of money for the "divine one."

Although the African-American religious tradition supported freedom and justice issues, Proctor said it has maintained "anti-science sentiments" which limited its "basic theological agenda."[5] His training at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania freed him from the strict fundamentalism of the African-American religious tradition. He believed the essential stylistic difference in the African-American and white biblical interpretation and worship had led white Americans to accept slavery; men to accept the subjugation of women; the rich to ignore the poor; and a variety of unChristian acts around the world.

Expectation and Hope—The Proctor Family's Life

The Proctor family's emphasis on education and African-American educational institutions played a pivotal role in his early intellectual development. In addition to acquiring rudimentary educational knowledge, his early schooling afforded exposure to invaluable African-American scholar-activist role models. As a youngster, his high school biology teacher, Alene Black, made an indelible impression on him as a plaintiff in a class action suit for African-American public school teacher's pay equity. The highly trained and competent young teacher was fired by her local school board. Her action made him aware that the Jim Crow system of segregation could and should be challenged by African-Americans.

From his high school years, he entered Virginia State College where African-American intellectuals, such as, Luther Porter Jackson and Tommy Carter trained many of the leading African-American educators. In college, he played in the Virginia State Trojans, a dance orchestra, with Billy Taylor who became an internationally recognized jazz musician. His early college years betrayed the rich high school preparation which he

received in Norfolk. In his own words, "Collecting cute girls, dancing, and fraternity capers crowded my agenda. I had no energy for serious matters."[6] After experiencing a religious conversion, he changed his life. He took a year off from college and worked in Norfolk at various jobs. During the year, he decided to study for the ministry and transfer to Virginia Union University, an African-American Baptist institution.

In 1942 he received his bachelor's degree and became a third-generation African-American college graduate. As the paternal grandson of a former slave who became an 1882 Hampton Institute graduate and the son of two former Norfolk Mission College students, he was imbued with the value of education as an important instrument of personal and social change. His family had very high expectations for him because they believed their children should "hold [their] heads high with expectation and hope."[7] It was those ideas which sustained him as the only African-American student in Crozier Seminary and one of a handful of African-American students in Yale University and Boston University.

Similarly, the local Norfolk community had high expectations for him and his five siblings due to his family's social status. In the segregated South, African-American community status was as much a consequence of what an individual accomplished in terms of education and financial assets as how an individual lived their daily life in terms of "the simplest virtues of honesty, sobriety, thrift, kindness, charity, and mutual respect."[8] The Proctor Family held steadfast to the simple virtues. These virtues became a staple of Proctor's life throughout his career.

Things Hoped For—Government Service

After serving as the president of two historically African-American universities, Virginia Union University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State College (North Carolina A&T), he worked in the presidential administrations of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson. As he worked with the Peace Corps in Nigeria during the Kennedy years, he thought about Black identity issues. These thoughts helped him to develop an understanding about his African and American identity. Similarly, his work with Sargent Shriver's Office of Economic Opportunity provided exposure to leading civil rights activists, including, Fannie Lou Hamer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. During the "Black Power" era, Proctor's integrationist vision of hope was subjected to attack from the NABE and many others with militant black nationalist views.

In government service he worked in positions which focused on issues of racial justice and an integrated society. Despite his strong religious values and educational training which influenced his governmental service, his main ideological focus was the political hope articulated by the Boule members. Proctor's civic work was based on a desire to include more African-Americans into the "mainstream" of American life, "things hoped for." While his memoir provides the reader with a career filled with interesting details, some important issues were not addressed by the author.

The book's greatest strengths were the continuous expression of the author's indomitable spirit and faith in God as well as his belief in Gunnar Myrdal's concept of the American Creed. His belief in the possibility of the American Creed coming to pass was supported by his African-American religious upbringing. It was at the core of his work with many government programs. In addition, it was the basis for his recent National Youth Academy proposal (a sophisticated version of AmeriCorps), Rutgers University non-traditional students' master's program, and Institute for Service to Education. His beliefs were reenforced by the kindness of many individuals, including white southern liberals who provided unexpected gifts on his return to college and a church for worship after his family's church was destroyed by fire.

His faith enlivened the pages of a memoir which often made this reader feel as though he was riding a five to six year changing career roller coaster. The roller coaster ride led Proctor around the world from one job to another. While he suggested his wife and family moved happily from place to place, the constant upheaval of his familial arrangement tested credibility regarding the explanation of why he continued to be motivated personally to frequently change his occupation. As a highly motivated scholar, one wonders where opportunity to serve ended and sheer opportunism began.

The book's greatest weakness is the author's failure to explain the influence of Christian fundamentalism in contemporary society and the relationship of his "liberal" theological views to the liberation theologians of the 1960's and 1970's. While the author mentioned an encounter with the apolitical former "segregationist," Billy Graham, he did not explain why Graham and his fellow contemporary "Christian Conservatives" wield the type of political clout which results in Graham's offering Clinton's inaugural invocation as well as political advice.

Although the memoir was not designed as a theological exegesis on the role of religion in modern society, he failed to connect the influence of his theological readings with contemporary scholarship on the African-American church, such as, Joseph Washington, James Cone, Albert Cleage, and John Henrik Clarke. His personal reflections were fascinating but they would have been enhanced by a critical discussion of others' ideas.

Despite the book's weaknesses, it provided a strong counter response to the negative popular descriptions of the African-American family and church. His book offered testimony to the resourcefulness and clarity of purpose which have sustained many African-Americans. Although many critical themes were highlighted in the book, it left readers of different generations with two essential points: (1) the young reader received an excellent historical overview of the sweet struggles of a successful African-American male; and (2) older readers were provided many thoughtful observations about the validity of integration in the 21st century. With these generational contributions, Proctor's memoir adds to the rich tradition of African-American autobiography by

providing trenchant commentary on the socio-political dynamics of the African-American community.

Notes

[1]Samuel DeWitt Proctor, *The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996), 120.

[2]Ibid., 119-20.

[3]Ibid., 21.

[4]Ibid., 22.

[5]Ibid., 48.

[6]Ibid., 34.

[7]Ibid., 18.

[8]Ibid., 16.

Donald Cunnigen is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is currently working on a co-edited volume about Booker T. Washington. Additionally, he is co-editing a volume on second generation African-American sociologists.

An Interview with Dr. Robert M. Franklin, Jr., President of The Interdenominational Theological Center Atlanta, Georgia

by Harold W. Horton

In 1996 the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia named Dr. Robert M. Franklin, Jr. as its sixth president of the seminary. Previous to this appointment, Dr. Franklin was Program Officer for The Ford Foundation. He is a graduate of two theological seminaries, The Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus, Ohio and the McCormick Theological Seminary at the University of Chicago.

Harold W. Horton: Dr. Franklin, congratulations on being appointed the new president of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta and I certainly appreciate having the opportunity to conduct this interview with you. To begin, please give a brief overview of your personal background, that is, where you were born and raised; colleges that you attended and your family circumstances.

Robert M. Franklin: I was born and reared in Chicago in an extended family household that included a grandmother, two parents, two uncles and one aunt. I am the oldest of six children. I was also reared in the St. Paul Church of God in Christ where my family spent lots of time during the week. I attended Morgan Park High School in Chicago and went on to Morehouse College in Atlanta. I spent a year in England at Durham University before returning to earn an Masters of Divinity degree at Harvard Divinity School and a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago.

HWH: How would you describe your feelings, in general, with regard to your new appointment?

RMF: Standing before what is likely to be the adventure of my life, I am excited, inspired, energized and anxious and contemplative all at the same time.

HWH: What are some major goals and objectives you will attempt to accomplish in the next few years at ITC?

RMF: I would like ITC to become a more effective learning center, think tank and clearinghouse for the Black Church first, and for all communities of faith in the United States and around the globe.

HWH: What are your plans and strategies for making certain that you will have the financial resources to accomplish your major goals and objectives at ITC?

RMF: We will project our vision of the role a seminary can play in transforming the Church and the society and then ask our friends to help the implementations of the vision.

HWH: What state or condition, in your opinion, do you believe ITC is in, overall at this time?

RMF: President James Costen has navigated the school into a secure harbor. ITC is growing and its prospects are very bright. We will need the assistance of the media and journals, like this one, to help us tell the story more effectively.

HWH: Are theological seminaries in America experiencing difficult in encouraging students to pursue a career in or a calling to the pastoral ministry?

RMF: Generally speaking, in the Black community there is a no shortage of available clergy people. We don't have a supply problem; we may have a quality supply challenge. That's why all seminaries in America must do a better job of attracting, retaining, supporting, and placing African-American ministry students.

Most mainline white churches are facing a serious long-term clergy supply problem complicated by declining white birth rates. Someday, white churches may have to face the prospect of hiring a Latino, Asian or African-American pastor. Many have already begun to embrace this opportunity in a hopeful way.

HWH: Describe the role that you would like to see graduates of ITC assume in their respective congregations and communities as related to social, political, and economic development.

RMF: I'd like ITC graduates to be on the front line of community revitalization alongside other professionals. Pastors can offer moral vision for the economic and housing development that must be initiated. They must remind us that new homes and new jobs will make new people. Also, clergy must encourage and guide people in the arts of democracy. We've got to return to the heightened political consciousness passed on to us by early generations of activists like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Dr. Martin L. King, and Ella Baker.

One encouraging note on Black political participation, the Million Man March appears to have energized Black men who voted in record numbers in 1996. Religious leaders must continue to promote such responsible citizenship.

HWH: To what extent do you believe that the role or significance of religion or the Church is in the Black community has changed?

RMF: Following the Civil Rights Movement the Black Church faced new challenges with the rapidly changing demographics in the Black community, changing political culture, and changing global economy. The Black middle-class grew and many physically left the traditional Black urban enclaves exchanging them for suburban life. Blacks have higher education, new cultural loyalties, and raised expectation for the quality of their worship experience. Presidents Reagan and Bush's domestic policies were hostile towards blacks and other ethnic groups. This encouraged despair and disengagement from the political process, encouraged many Black men to leave the Church.

With the changes in the global economy, including the attractiveness of cheap labor in developing countries, the competitive strength of many Asian nations, the United States economy began to restructure resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of high-wage, low-skill jobs which many Black families had benefitted from in the 1950s and 1960s. This added financial hardships to families and churches.

All of these dynamics impacted the Black communities oldest and most significant institution.

Today, people are coming back to spirituality, God and the church, temple and mosque. But, they return with expectations that clergy will respect their intellects professional abilities, and standards. The Black Church is becoming more relevant to our lives as it was during the freedom struggle. Thanks to the presence of exciting new Black preachers who began to build strong mega-churches and to lead the struggle for justice, we are in a hopeful place on the eve of a new millennium. I will discuss these issues in my next book.

HWH: Do you have a favorite theologian? Tell us a little about such person.

RMF: Booker T. Washington. I know that is not a name you expected. Washington had an incredible leadership challenge—to transform the thinking and behavior of former slaves in ways that would advance Black freedom without arousing white hostility. He preached a gospel of the "head, hand and heart," and viewed religion as an holistic and practical affair. Now, Washington was somewhat superficial when it comes to the depths of spiritual existence. For guidance with that, I enjoy exploring the work of the Black mystic/activist, Howard Thurman.

I am also enriched spiritually by the Asian evangel, Watchman Nee, by the German Lutheran, Paul Tillich and by the sister from Detroit, Aretha Franklin.

HWH: In what way(s) do you believe that religious leaders could do more to bring about racial harmony in their respective communities?

RMF: Religious leaders should continue to hold up God's vision of a reconciled humanity for us. We need to see the vision constantly and teach others how to make progress on a day-by-day basis. It would also help if leaders in the spirit of atonement, would admit our own complicity with racism, antisemitism and bias towards people who differ from us. We need visions, rituals, examples and gatherings that remind us of Dr. King's unfinished agenda.

HWH: What's your general attitude concerning the issue of prayer in public schools in America?

RMF: People ought to pray all the time, to live in an ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Creator. I do not oppose ritual prayer in public space but I'm very cautious about the possibilities of abuse and disrespect of the spirituality of those who may differ from the dominant tradition.

HWH: What, in your opinion, is indicative of the recent burning of churches in the Black community?

RMF: The burnings are a complex and varied form of social evil. Some are racist attacks against the most cherished institution in Black life. Some are anti-religious expressions of troubled people. Some are nonideological manifestations of madness and mental illness. The portion of them that are racially driven concerns us most because it represents the violent resurgence of a long-standing racist agenda to subjugate or exterminate people of color.

HWH: Finally, Dr. Franklin, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for granting me the privilege to conduct this short, but highly informative interview with you. I realize that you are in the process of wrapping things up at The Ford Foundation and probably thinking enthusiastically about your new challenge as the President of ITC. One behalf of the Trotter Institute, we extend best wishes to you and the Center.

Harold W. Horton is associate director of The Trotter Institute. He teaches in the Graduate College of Education and the Africana Studies Department at University of Massachusetts Boston. Dr. Horton holds a Ph.D., as well as two degrees in theology.

A Profile of the Reverend Michael E. Haynes of Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts

by Kimberly R. Moffitt

The hand-clapping of "happy souls" stops. The singing of the choir's songs of Zion ceases; and the minister no longer stands in the pulpit conducting his sermon. Sunday morning worship service is now over at Twelfth Baptist Church; but the work of the church's senior minister, Reverend Michael E. Haynes, is not. For approximately forty years Reverend Haynes has made himself available in a variety of capacities to his congregation, his friends and family, and especially, the young people of Roxbury, Massachusetts. At times when it seemed others "threw in the towel," he has simply stood steadfast, as his scriptures advise him, and persevered in his work to help young people.

And there is much to be done in the Roxbury community. Recognizing the true purpose of the Black Church, Reverend Haynes believes in blending religion and the concern for community together, in hopes of creating change socially, economically, and politically. This belief is easily demonstrated in his work of the past and present. Since the 1950s the minister served as a social worker, counselor, and friend to those viewed "at risk" by many in professional sectors. At any given point and time Reverend Haynes could be found sharing his knowledge with a group of young men standing on a street corner, sometimes reprimanding them for a mishap that could have been avoided or encouraging them to move forward beyond their many societal obstacles. It was the perceived potential in these young men that prompted the minister to start an effort he named "The Exquisite."

The Exquisite was the project of Reverend Haynes and his friend, Clarence "Jeep" Jones. These men of great foresight wanted to demonstrate to others, as well as the young men, themselves, that something positive could happen in their community. This club, as it was referred, worked with young Black men encouraging them to excel at sports, as well as academics. Academics played just as vital a role in these young lives as sports; Reverend Haynes made sure of that. Scholarship information was provided; internship programs were sought; and college tours were coordinated. Simply put, sports would not be the sole focus of this group. Although Reverend Haynes recognized that a college education was not for everyone, he did support those who decided to further their education. Once students were admitted to college, Reverend Haynes assisted in many ways to keep them there: tutoring, pep talks, or unexpected visits to dormitories just to verify how their studies were going.

And for those who decided not to attend college, Reverend Haynes organized an outdoor basketball league and a football league at the Norfolk House. The settlement house, formerly situated in Elliot Square, served as a link to the changing Boston neighborhood during the 1950s. It was a very difficult time for everyone: the white children of the area were trying to adjust to the Black children moving into the neighborhood and the Black children were trying to adjust to their new surroundings. But the sports leagues were able to diffuse many of those hostilities with success. Instead of the continued rivalries and rifts, the young men flocked to the settlement house for sports, as well as weekly parties and dances, tutoring, and arts and crafts. The foundation had now been laid for those that Reverend Haynes and Mr. Jones saw potential in and simply needed a little push, which they were willing to offer.

An example of the fruit of Reverend Haynes's faith, and work with young people is the H. Carl McCall, a former pool hustler as a teenager. His first encounter with Reverend Haynes was in front of a Roxbury pool hall. The Reverend suggested that the youngster find more constructive activities to utilize his time; and soon after McCall began work with the minister at one of his summer camps. McCall, a former New York state legislator and deputy United States ambassador to the United Nations, is now a commissioner of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and a vice president for Citibank. Then there is Albert Holland, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Boston Public Schools, who reflects graciously on his time with Reverend Haynes. "Uncle Mike," as he is referred by the former Exquisite, "was a father figure to many of us." Mr. Holland spoke to the personal struggles in his own troubled teen years and how Reverend Haynes spent a lot of time with him and the other members creating a sense of community and family among them. And that family still exists for Al Holland was quite explicit when proclaiming, "There's still a tight bond between many of us...and we still look to Uncle Mike for advise because we could and can always depend on him."

Unfortunately not all of Reverend Haynes's Exquisite achieved as McCall and Holland. He has seen his share of those that chose a life of crime, spending most of their time in correctional institutions, instead of enjoying a life of freedom. Nevertheless, Reverend Haynes still stood by them. He has even tried to help them in his former position with the Massachusetts Parole Board. For 16 years he read files on potential parolees, some who were past Exquisite members, others who were childhood friends, and even some who were members of his church congregation. Reverend Haynes viewed this appointment as another opportunity to help and encourage young Black men in trouble with the law; and hopefully demonstrate the choices (positive, of course) they had before them.

Recognizing his capacity and responsibility as a role

model, the minister decided to run for political office at the urging of a group of college students. In 1964 Reverend Haynes ran successfully for representative of the Massachusetts State House, serving three terms. In addition to fulfilling his duties as a politician, he also used his office to educate the young people of his community. He exposed them to the legislative process, many of the Exquisites spending lots of time in the corridors of the State House. But more importantly, he exhibited that they too could achieve anything with determination and desire.

The minister's commitment and inner strength has not changed, although today he leaves his more youthful styles for those who are younger than he. Reverend Haynes no longer approaches young men on the street or reprimands proprietors for selling alcohol and tobacco products to underage youths. He suggests it is too risky and dangerous now for many people are not willing and appreciative of his concern. But the minister does see a dire need for the value system to be re-built, which takes the whole community. The Black Church cannot be solely responsible for reinstituting values in a community faced with drugs, violence, and crime. However, the Church does play a significant role; and Reverend Michael E. Haynes proudly stands at the forefront ready to participate in the move forward. He just hopes and prays that other parts of the community are with him: parents, schools, and other non-profit organizations. With a re-direction of values for youth who have been lost, Reverend Haynes truly believes that Roxbury will revive.

So even though worship service has ended, Reverend Haynes realizes that the work of his Church and his duty as God's messenger is only beginning. "I only want to implement God's concern for people as much as I can," the Reverend proclaims.

"Gotta do better, gotta get better" are words often spoken by Reverend Haynes; and all his duties and positions served as a true testament to his own works. He only expected his young mentees to strive and achieve all they could, which is exactly what he does. For forty years, from the pulpit to the street corner, Reverend Haynes has definitely worked to do better and get better for others. And Roxbury's community will be blessed to have to have him for his years to come, and beyond.

Kimberly R. Moffitt is a doctoral student in communications at Howard University. She formerly served as publications manager of the *Trotter Review*, and continues to provide assistance in planning and producing this journal.

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